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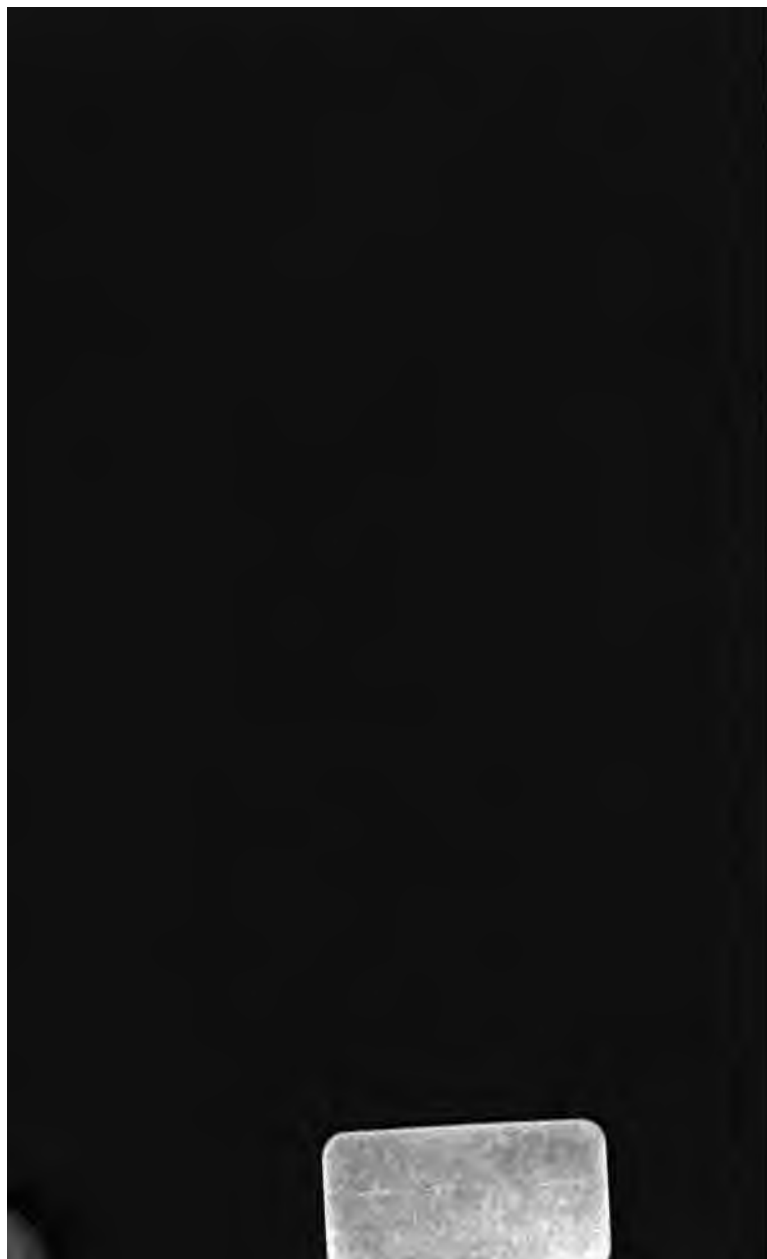
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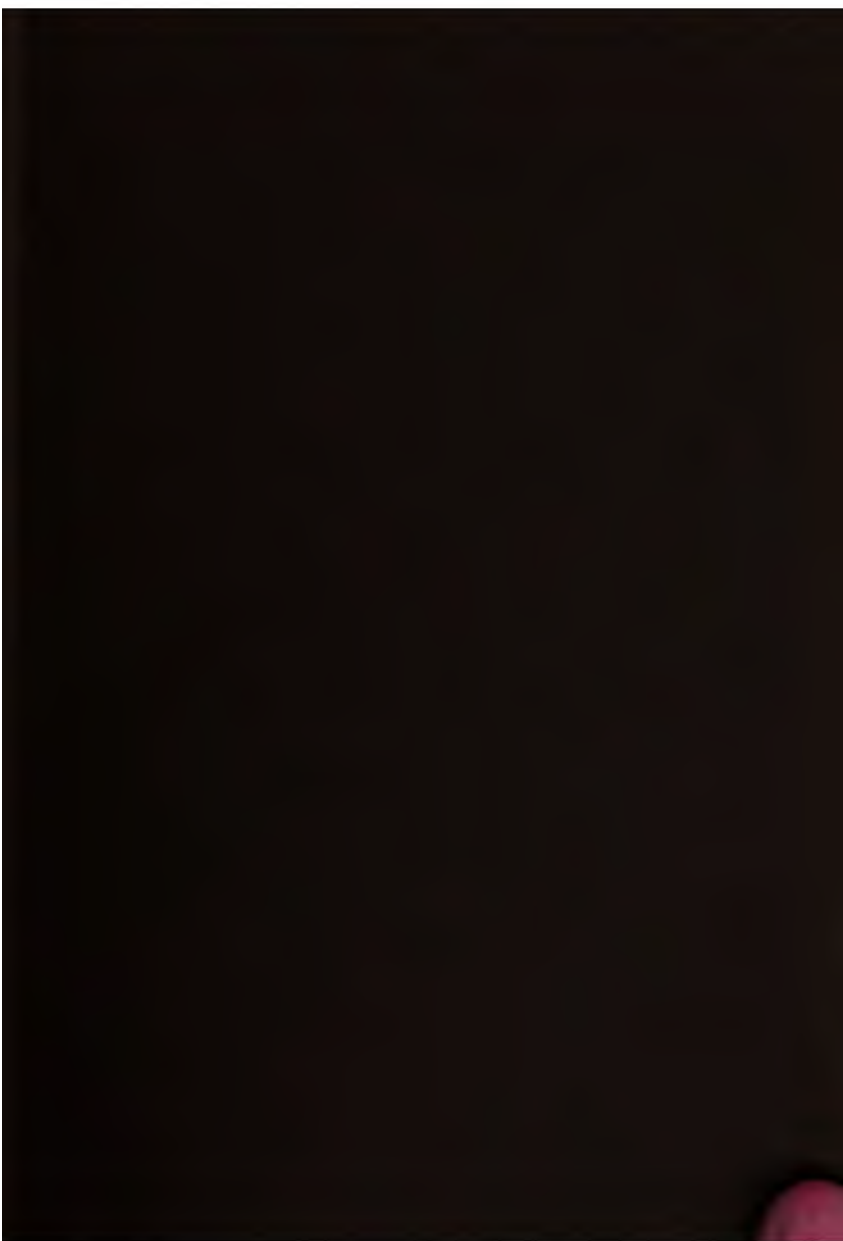
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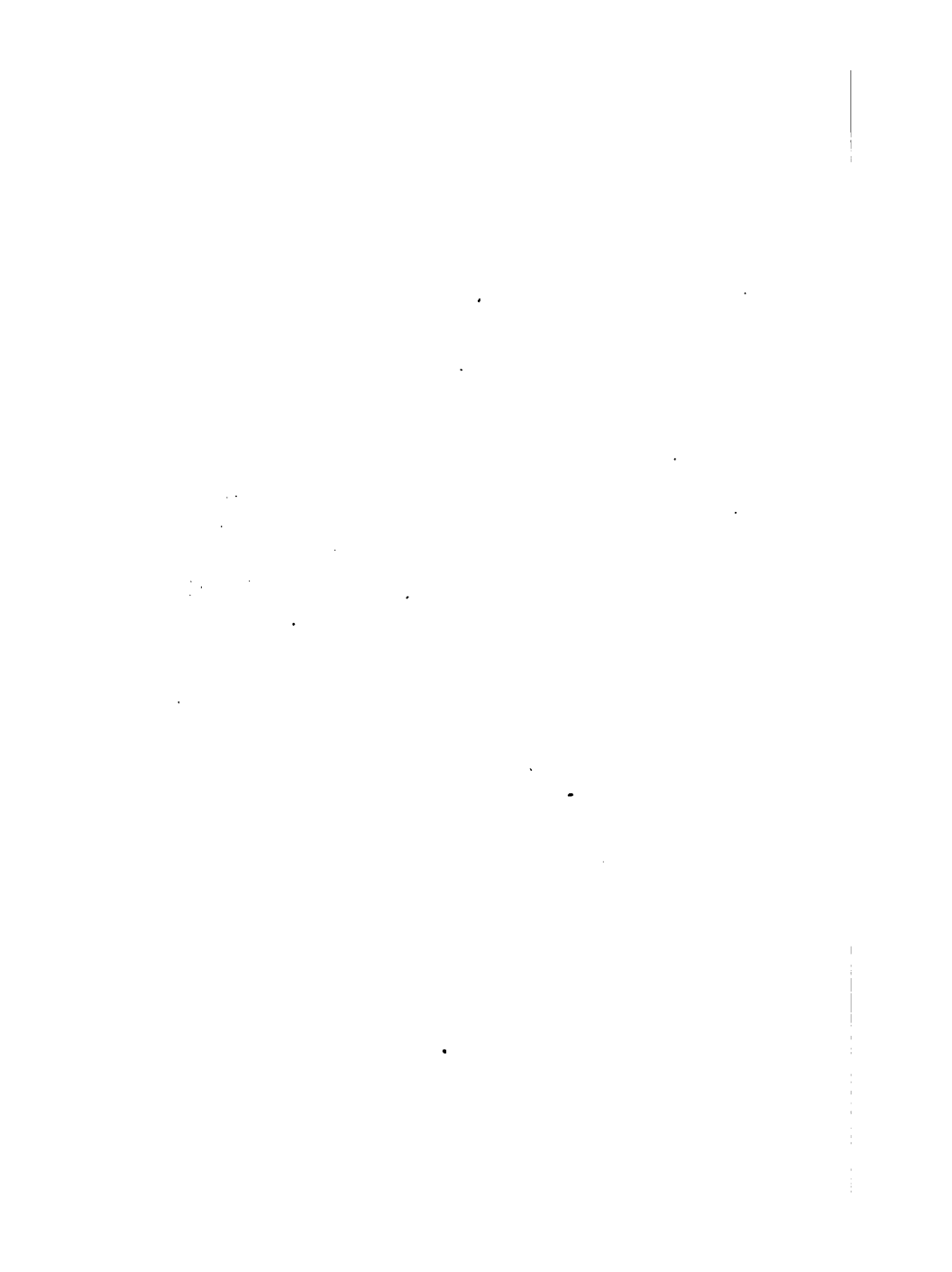
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CHIEF WOMEN.



CHIEF WOMEN;

OR,

HIGHER LIFE IN HIGH PLACES.

BY

MRS. GORDON,

*Author of "The Home Life of Sir David Brewster," "Work: Plenty
to do, and How to do it," etc.*

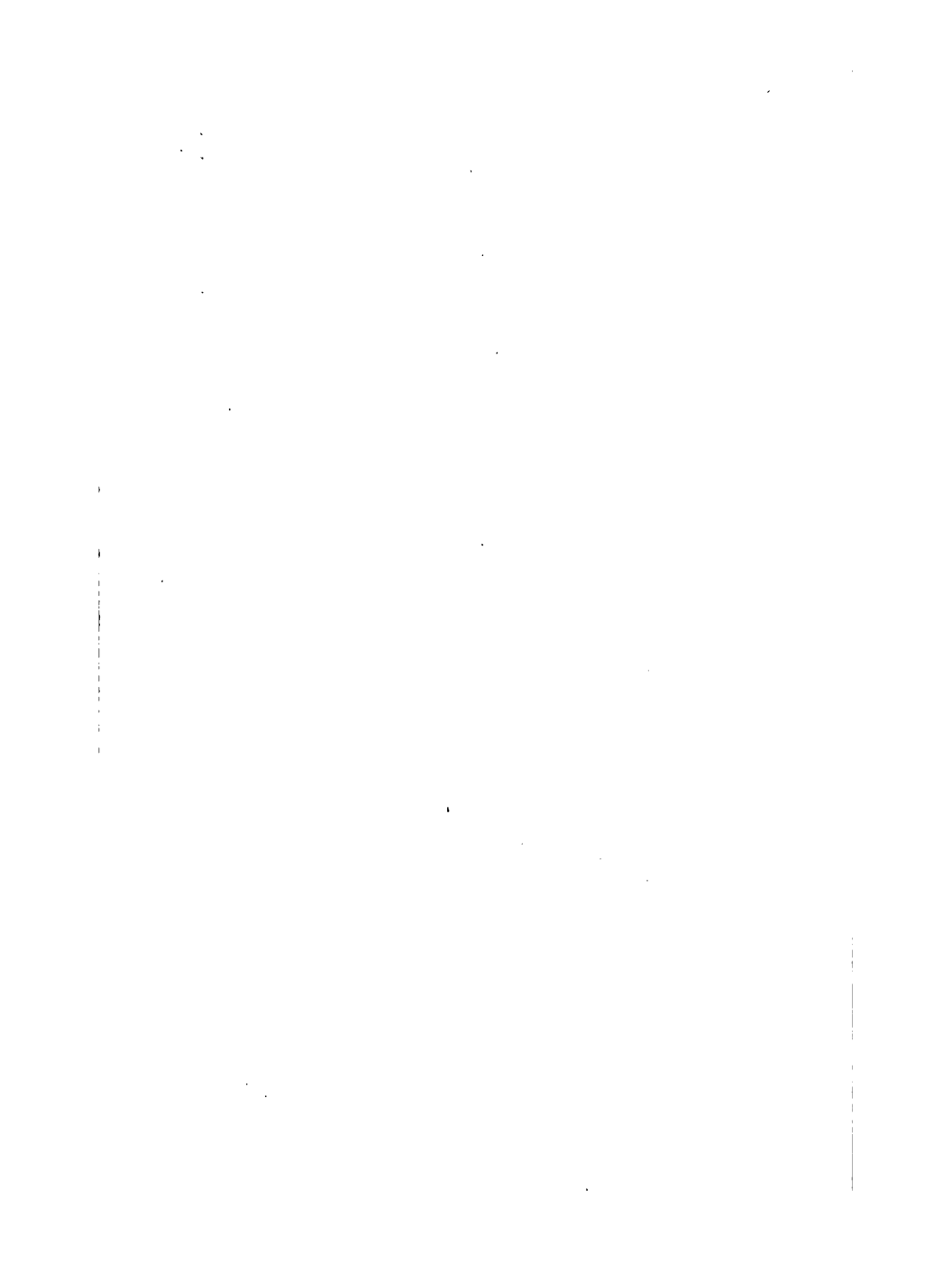


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Contents.

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER	
I. FOR AND AGAINST	3
II. INDIVIDUALITY	19
III. VANITY OF VANITIES	33
IV. WITHOUT AND WITHIN	49
V. PALACE CLOTHING	67
VI. CUTTING AND CARVING	87
VII. GIFTS AND GIVERS	105
VIII. DIVERSITY	127
IX. STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS	143
X. POLISHING AND POLITICS	163
XI. MUCH OR LITTLE	185
XII. GOD'S DYKE	203
XIII. ÆSTHETICS	221
XIV. COST AND CROSS	245
XV. SERVICE	263
XVI. SPECIAL WORK	283
XVII. EXCELSIOR	309

Introductory Chapter.

THERE is one great object which ought to engage the attention of every Christian teacher or worker in these days: *i.e.*, to do their utmost to hinder the precepts of the Word of God from becoming obsolete. **THIS** seems to be the root of our social, political, and home evils. If it were but infidelity, in its many shades and phases, that caused an incrustation of the Scriptures in the minds which it attacks and conquers, the evil would not be so crying; but I speak of the small power which God's Word is suffered to exert in His professing Church. Some great doctrines are held with a firm grasp; but everywhere

Introductory Chapter.

we find feeble, unhappy, undecided souls, to whom the glad and tranquilizing and wisdom-giving voice of Christ in His holy Word brings no relish, no comfort, no guidance, simply because they do NOT believe in its efficacy. The Word of Christ does NOT dwell in them richly. Religion is to them a thing of Christianity, and NOT of Christ. They do NOT expect the Scriptures will "testify" of a living, loving, Personal Power; and so while they skim chapters, they rarely "search" the Bible. Truly this is to render the Word of God in its glorious entirety "of none effect."

It is in the hope of adding the feeblest lever to the work going on already, in many ways, of exalting and commending the Scriptures, that I send out this little volume: and a rich reward I should feel it to be if but a few hearts were thereby led to "taste and see" what good things they are passing by unheeded, ere it be TOO LATE.

Introductory Chapter.

A learned man on his deathbed said, ere he passed away, "Oh, I have lost a world of time! If spared one more year it should be spent in reading David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles." Would that this conviction of wasted time might come in life and in health,—to old as well as young,—along with the determination to secure the treasures which are infinitely better than they have as yet known, seen, or possessed.

It is no easy thing to take our stand upon the Word of God, and follow its precepts, whatever else betide; and to say with Luther, "Hier stehe ich: Ich kann nicht anders: Gott helfe mir!" But the Lord commends this union of valour and obedience, saying to each of us, "Be thou very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book." (Josh. xxiii. 6.) Our gracious Lord, moreover, never gives us impossible commands, and never places us in a difficulty, without giving

Introductory Chapter.

us a Helper, aye, and even a Doer of it for us. So He gives us some wonderful promises, not only in but about His Book. A Bible-woman lately told me that when she sat down as usual to the study of the Scriptures, she one day found her Bible "so dry like," as she quaintly expressed it, that she "could make nothing of it." Distressed and puzzled, she knelt down, and asked for help, when this verse came into her memory, with its needed lesson: "The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof." (Rev. v. 5.) She rose from her knees, humbly, thankfully, looking to Jesus. And the seals *were* loosed, and even as on the road to Emmaus, Jesus Himself opened the Scriptures, as He is ready to do even to the weakest, the feeblest among us, making our hearts burn within us, as He unfolds Himself to us in His Word. (Luke xxiv. 32.)

Introductory Chapter.

I address these chapters to "chief women," because their post like every gift of God is good, and therefore to be used for good ; and if the Word of God were not only sounded from, but lived out in the drawing-rooms of Great Britain, I believe that greater blessings would circulate through the land than we have an idea of. God does not intend influence of position to be wrapped up in a napkin, any more than other talents and gifts ; and the safest, richest way of investment, will be found in the banking-house of God's Word and Work.

In the following chapters I give many Scripture references, and I earnestly hope that my readers will examine them for themselves, as without this appeal my views and statements will lack both interest and authority.

In case of being misunderstood, I may also

Introductory Chapter.

explain, that wherever I use the word "Church" in these pages, I do so in the general meaning of the whole body of believers, and not any particular denomination.

MARGARET MARIA GORDON.

*Pillurg, Ellon,
January, 1874.*

I.

For and Against.



“Oh, strife of Good and Ill, with life coeval !
Oh, Truth of truths, shall yet be understood
That where we put our finite powers for evil,
God doth put His, infinite, for good ;
And the Sovereign Love and Wisdom may not always be
withstood.”

ANNA BLACKWELL.

“CHIEF WOMEN.”



For and Against.

“The elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.”—

2 JOHN 1.

“I shall be a lady for ever.”—ISAIAH xlvii. 7.

IT is very interesting to compare the state of society in Scripture times with our own. In those early Judæan days, when the Carpenter, the fisherman, and the tent-maker had brought about the most marvellous revolution of thought, manners, customs, and religion of which there is record in any history, women were never slow to welcome or oppose. In the Gospels, indeed, they shine in the light of a simple faith and a fearless profession, while apparently their position in life was much the same as the humble Apostles

and their lowly Master. That some of these women were more or less wealthy we know, because many were able to follow Him from Galilee ministering of their substance; but we find no hint of high station, unless it be that of "Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward." It is not so, however, in later Scriptural history. In the days of Paul, when the movement affected the whole social scale, from the slave to the courtier, we find it especially mentioned by the Holy Spirit that women of the upper classes were arrayed—even as in our own days—FOR as well as AGAINST the Gospel of Christ. "Chief women," "honourable women," "not a few," became believers (in the thorough heartsome sense which the word then alone expressed) both at Thessalonica and Berea (Acts xvii. 4, 12); while the "elect" or "chosen lady," some time later, with her children, nobly filled the position indicated by her title, which in the original is the feminine of "lord." It was far otherwise, however, at Antioch. (Acts xiii. 50, 51.) The Jews, with the far-seeing policy of a nation which had possessed a Deborah, a Jael, and a Huldah, recognizing at once the great influence of women, especially those of superior rank, took their measures accordingly. With consummate art, too, it was the "devout" as well as honourable

women that they "stirred up" to persecute and expel the Gospel.

The word "stir" is an important one: we use it familiarly in our daily lives. When we "stir" the fire we excite into a flaming energy the dormant heat abiding in the coals, and in these honourable women there must have been a latent antagonism against the new message of God. They could not have been in the state of those humble-minded Jews, men and women, who in earlier times were waiting, praying, and praising for the consolation of Israel. Still they were called "devout." Strange that even devotion should be found arraying itself against God! We meet with a parallel case in Isaiah lviii. 1, 2, where we find actual delight in "ordinances" in those who were being sternly rebuked for hypocrisy and sin. Delight in approaching TO God, but not IN God, as is well contrasted in verses 2, 14. St. Paul characterized this state as "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

So the fire was stirred,—a fire we may guess to be the same alluded to in James iii. 5, 6,—all the more likely, alas, in a feminine war! And the honourable and devout women so influenced society that the sweet Gospel message found "no room" in Antioch, and the messengers departed: not

without an awful testimony of that terrible antagonism, for they shook off the dust of their feet against the devout and honourable women.

The Old Testament also contains many allusions to the influence of women of the upper classes, where often, indeed, we find them used as types of good and evil. On the Lord's side we find the King's daughter, "all glorious within," with her fair troop of maidens ready to enter into the palace (see Psalm xlv. 13, 14); and the beautiful Shulamite (Cant. vii. 1), the daughter of a Prince as well as the bride of the King; while the prophetic promise that Queens should be the nursing mothers of the Church has been often literally fulfilled.

On the other side we find the "Lady of kingdoms trusting in her wisdom and knowledge," boastful of her position (read Isa. xlvii. 5—11), given to pleasures and dwelling carelessly: if a good type of the worldly city of old, surely she forms as good a portrait of the worldly lady of our days. Do we not also find a life-like picture of a fashionable woman in the type of Jerusalem clothed in crimson, decked in ornaments of gold, her face rent with painting, her heart full of "vain thoughts," her mind set on *making herself fair*, and "rebellious against Me, saith the Lord"? (Jer. iv. 14, 30.) How awfully and closely observant of

our feminine ways, foibles, and fashions were those old Prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God! Other graphic sketches of the daughters who live "at ease," "in pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness," we find in Isaiah xxxii. 9—11; Ezekiel xvi. 49. "At ease!" in careless "idleness!"—strange contrast with the command "to tremble!" which fully to understand we must combine with Revelation xviii. 7; 1 Timothy v. 6 (margin); and specially with Amos vi. 1—6. How distinctly marked in these Scriptures we find the characteristics of the present day,—the ease and self-indulgence, the costly furniture, the pleasures of the table, the delicate living, and the "abundance of superfluities!" (See margin of Amos vi. 4.)

But of all passages in God's Word, Ezekiel xiii. 17—23 contains the fullest and most awful recognition of woman's influence. If in the preceding passages we have a "woe" against thus simply living at ease, we have in this another "woe" addressed to those who teach others to be at ease also. "Woe to these women,"—respectable professors, pretended prophesiers, too,—who "sew pillows to all elbows (marg.), and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature" (those of all ages and sizes), who in the words of an old commentator, "did all they could to make people secure, which

is signified by the easy pillow ; and to make people proud, which is signified by dressing them fine with handkerchiefs, perhaps laid or embroidered on their heads." No great outward sin alluded to apparently ; simply adopting the deceptions and the pleasures of the world (see marg. of ver. 20), and thereby causing injury to souls. Awful result ! these chief women were possessed of such gifts of influence as to make sad the heart of the righteous whom God had not made sad, and to strengthen the hands of the wicked : "woe" to such, for "I am AGAINST your pillows ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

Since those Scripture days we have a long train of followers of these two sides, "for and against" God. We need not dwell on the evil influences of our sex, exerted through long centuries, whether in the infidel *salons* of Paris, or in high places in our own and all other lands. Nor need we multiply examples of the brighter side of the picture, —the patrician maidens who rest in the martyr tombs of the Roman catacombs ; or the noble Christian ladies of Italy ; or those high-born Spanish women who counted it all joy to stand at the *auto-da-fé* in their yellow robes of shame, and to die at the Quemadéro "outside the gate" of the city, like their Master ; or our own chief women

of the English Reformation, and the Covenanting times of Scotland, when

“ It was not for her heather
She was called ‘the purple land,’ ”

down to the present days, with the ever-increasing number ranged on the side of their Lord.

There is indeed no necessity to heap together testimony as to the patent fact that women—in a position where they necessarily attract attention by the gifts which God has given them—do possess a very real and important influence for or against Him. But ere we pass on let us take two historical illustrations of the two sides of influence. Here is a noble widow, whose well-beloved husband perished on the scaffold in the old city of Edinburgh, not as a traitor to his country, but as a martyr to the cause of Christ. She was the wife of the Marquis of Argyll; and of their home history it was said that “true religion shed its hallowed and ennobling influence over their domestic life, sweetening its enjoyments as well as lightening its trials, and rendered their whole deportment a living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.” Then came the “dark years” of Scotland, and after months of dreadful suspense the Marquis was condemned to die. The true wife, after saying her last

farewell, longed to help her beloved one to meet the last enemy, and was honoured by a signal answer to prayer. Pleading with God in another place, along with a godly minister, "that the Lord would now seal his charter by saying unto him, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,'" at that very time her husband, though in the midst of those who were settling his worldly affairs, was visited with such a sense of the Divine favour as almost overpowered him; and in vain attempting to conceal his emotion, he cried out, "I must declare what God has done for my soul: He has just now sealed my charter in these words, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee!'" So the naturally timorous man—for Argyll was denied

"The gift of valour and that gift alone"—

was strengthened and comforted by God's grace into the bravest of our martyrs. For seventeen years the martyr's widow lived a noble life for God, fulfilling the duties of her station and her extensive home circle, and acting besides as a feminine medical missionary, so many were the cases of healed bodies as well as souls of which she was the instrument. At last she lay down to die a death of far greater agony than her husband's; but He with whom she had lived for a long life-time stood

beside her in the furnace, and she died in deepest peace, on the 13th of March, 1678. It was said of her that, like Daniel, her worst enemies could not tax her with anything save her adherence to the law of her God.*

Here is an open grave waiting for its tenant : a grave in sunny France. But there is no sunshine around it—no words of hope graven upon its granite—no comfort in the mocking wreath of yellow amaranth. It is the grave of a woman. See how the senseless dust is hurried from yonder regal pile, amidst storm and rain. Hark to a jesting voice: "Madame la Marquise has rainy weather for this her last journey." Alas, the change! But a few years since, that voice was a voice of a lover; but a little while since, that clay was a living, breathing, sparkling beauty. That stately pile is Versailles, that heartless jester is Louis XV., and that poor corpse was once Madame de Pompadour, the idol of a Monarch—the arbitress of destinies and dynasties—for all around bowed to her will and lauded her words as if she had been a crowned wife.

Not one of the listless butterflies of fashion, this woman was diligent. In what? "From the time

* Abridged from Anderson's "Ladies of the Covenant."

she became the King's mistress to the epoch of her death, to please and amuse her royal lover was the sole study of her life." To consolidate her power, and render her talents as well as her charms necessary to Louis XV., she kindled the sparks of the Seven Years' War, which scathed and shamed the land, and she linked the houses of France and Austria in the union afterwards so fated and so fatal.

Soon, however there came a change over the dream, and it turned to dread reality. The loveliness faded, and the Monarch's so-called love faded with it. In her despondency she said that "for a beautiful woman to lose her beauty was worse than death." Then, too, the strength failed. No longer able to contend with the cares and disappointments and toilsome pleasures of her almost regal life, it is little wonder that she named it "a continual death." Then also might be heard the precursors of the storm, the mutterings of the distant thunder; for the miseries of France had already found a voice, "not loud, but deep," and Louis, once fondly named by his people "*le bien-aimé*," and she, his guilty counsellor, were hated and abjured; but no matter,—"*après nous le déluge*." Alas, she forgot the more immediate deluge which awaits the impenitent soul,—even the hail and the overflowing

waters, which sweeps away every refuge of lies! (Isaiah xxviii. 17.) Bereavement was not awaiting in the cup of retribution, and "soul-devouring *ennui*,"—perhaps a worse affliction to a Frenchwoman than all else beside. At last death came, from the name and thought of which she had ever shrunk with horror and disgust. He came, and would not depart, and so she died; and none wept over the grave of one whose life and whose work had been against God. Against God! "But what have WE to do with such a one as that miserable being,—we who are the respectable and respected of the earth?" God's Word gives the answer: "There is no difference, for all have sinned." Be the antagonism that of outward sin or outward respectability, or be it of greater or lesser manifestation, it is still a strife between good and evil, and "there is, no difference:" the sinner is on the WRONG SIDE.

Against God! It is a sad combination of words, and many honourable women seek to escape from them by their "devoutness." Many a one, Korah-like, think that if they belong to "the congregation" they are necessarily "holy." (Num. xvi. 3.) But no matter under what congregational form,—Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, or Dissenter; no matter under what aspect,—almsgiving, altar-

dressing, preacher-worship ; if it be all outside their HEARTS and God, they are just like the Antioch ladies, or like those Jews who delighted in approaching TO God, but not IN God ; or like Israel, when they forgot their Maker, and built temples. (Hosea viii. 14.)

Against God ! Others take refuge in neutrality : "Nobody can say that we are *against*, for we do neither God nor man any harm ; and though we do live year after year we don't very well know how, or for what object, yet we respect religion, and like religious people." Ah, but the Word of God cuts keen and clear : "He that is not WITH Me is AGAINST Me." (Luke xi. 23.)

Against God ! Others try to get out of the position by saying, "Why, we spend half of our lives in doing our duties for God, and the other half surely we may have to eat, drink, and amuse ourselves in !" Keen and clear again cuts the sword of the Spirit : "Ye cannot serve God and mammon ;" ye are not living "with," therefore ye are working "against."

Against God ! "Ah, but *I* don't care for the world at all," says another : "I go to balls, etc., certainly, but only as a duty to society. I greatly prefer being at home with my family, or my music, or my painting, or my gifts of intellect, or my

charitable works,—so how am I against God?" Dear friend, each one of those "*mys*" may be a giant "world" to you if you are not Christ's, and if all you have and do is not His. Ah, yes, you too are *against* because you are not *with*.

"He that is not with ME is against ME." Notice the personality of Christ's own words. It is not a thing of abstract duty, or mere tangible church stone and mortar, or even of painstaking good works; but it is not being "with" and "for" the Christ living then, loving then, and therefore being *against* the same Christ, living and loving yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Against Christ! What solemn thought this excites! Let us take with it the Apostle's declaration, that "Now are there many Antichrists in the world," and with its preceding statement, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15—18.) Worldliness, therefore, is ungodliness, and ungodliness means not open wickedness, but simply not being with or like God: in the literal translation, being without settled rule or aim,—thus not under the authority of God the Ruler, and therefore against His Christ. THE Antichrist that is to come, of which we have such a dim, mysterious idea,

will be indeed an embodiment of all evil,—a very man of sin. Yet let us not forget that the very word implies that in the hideous combination there will be some elements familiar to us in these days of open opposition, and far worse, of fashionable, half-hearted, nominal Christianity.

Antichrist means that which is “against,” by being “instead of” Christ: “so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.) Ah, truly the hidden heart-usurpation of this Arch-Imitator has long since commenced its sway, and many who dream not of it are kneeling before the curtained shrine from whence the matured evil is yet to be “revealed.”

“In its train
Follow all things unholy,—love of gold,
Ambition, reason, pride of place or name ;
All that we worship for itself alone,
All that we may not carry through the grave :
We have made idols of those perishing things,
Till they have grown time-honoured on their shrines.”

N. P. WILLIS.

If these things are truth, surely the three greatest needs of chief women are to see clearly the sin of their past misused influence, to get it pardoned and cleansed in the present ; and in the future, being thus changed and made new, to use it

meekly and humbly for their Lord, ministering to Him of their "substance," whether it be that of wealth, talent, rank, or attractions of any kind. Not easy, truly,—nay, very difficult,—nay, impossible to do this well and wisely, if left without a daily lamp and guide. But thank God it is not so. God has given us His Word, and in it we find the "rule of the road" for our whole homeward journey, and the law of the Master for our whole travelling work.

II.

Individuality.

“ ‘Who touched Me?’ dost thou ask :
 ’Twas I, Lord : it was I !
‘Some one touched Me.’ Yes, O Lord,
 I am that ‘somebody :’
 What could I do but touch,
 And Thou so nigh,—so nigh ?
What could’st Thou do but heal, O Lord,
 Ere I had time to cry ? ”

H. BONAR.

Individuality.

“Lovers of their own selves.”—2 TIM. iii. 2.

“They gave their own selves to the Lord.”—2 COR. viii. 5.

WORDS often obtain a false significance from frequent and careless use. For instance, the simple word SELF has come to be understood as a gigantic evil, which is held up to reprobation ; whereas it is only the love or worship of self which is the evil. Self is that marvellous complex creation of God, the individuality of each human being, whether savage or civilized, high or low, converted or unconverted. Self is just that part of us which has to do undisturbedly with God, whether He be recognised or not, into which none else can enter unbidden, and the mysteries of which none else can penetrate, “for in the pettiest character there are unfathomable depths.” It is that which is distinct from the self of any other man or woman, and which, however troublesome, none

would willingly exchange for that of others. It is the essence of self which goes forth unclothed in that great "Flight of the Alone to the Alone" which is before each of us. To lose sense and consciousness of self is so little desirable or praiseworthy, that, both in scriptural and ordinary language, "to be beside himself" is but another word for insanity. This individual self receives frequent recognition in God's Word, as might be expected from the only storehouse in which is found food and medicine for every want of the complex being. The sorrows and infirmities of humanity are characterized as "we ourselves groaning within ourselves" (Rom. viii. 23); the consolations of the Gospel, as "the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Cor. i. 4.) Still further individualized, we are recommended "to prove and to know our OWN selves" (2 Cor. xiii. 5); while in the verses at the head of this chapter, the right and the wrong, or the old and the new, state of "our own selves" is distinctly defined, of which we find striking contrasted examples in two feminine types: "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously!" "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. xviii. 7, and xix. 7.)

Above all, in the history of our Lord, we find

His individuality strongly marked. "Jesus Himself," are emphatic words, recorded for our use and comfort in some of the most encouraging portions of His life. In still more touching emphasis we have His own declaration, "I can of mine own Self do nothing;" with His prayer to the Father, "Glorify Thou me with Thine own Self" (John v. 30, and xvii. 5); while the wonderful effects of this Divine united Self we find in 1 Peter ii. 24: "Who His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."

Self, then, is just the core or centre of all intelligent human life: that of which our Lord commands, "Study to shew thySELF approved unto God" (2 Tim. ii. 15); shew "thySELF a pattern of good works." (Titus ii. 7.) This would seem a mystery without the light of Scripture; but we have but to remember the work of our ancestress to understand that self, being fallen, needs to be made a "new creature" before it can be used for the glory of its Creator. (2 Cor. v. 17.) This is the true or resurrection life! the old self crucified with Christ (Gal. ii. 20); and we "ourselves being thus indeed dead unto sin, alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 13.) And then comes the practical consequence: "yield yourselves unto God

as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Self, when in this healthy and life-some renewed state, should be like the sound brain or heart, which performs all its functions without giving any troublesome signs of its existence. Self, in short, should be "at leisure from itself," and therefore ready to do its master's work without "lifting up" unnecessary claims. (See Prov. xxx. 32.)

"GOD is the fountain at which I drink,
GOD is the ocean in which I sink :
I gaze o'er the main, but no shore descry,
And helpless and feeble, alas, am I !
What then : would I measure the flood immense ?
No : losing of self all thought and sense,
Undaunted the awful deep I brave,
And sink and dissolve like a drop in the wave."

THOLUCK.

How different this state from the miserable self-consciousness which is so peculiarly a feminine fault ! Whether as an additional remembrance that Eve was first deceived, and in the transgression, or whether from having less of the wear and tear of outer-self and outer-life, it is certainly a fact, that we women, even when we know the cure, suffer peculiarly from the pervading presence of the old inner self. Hence our tendency—especially in "hours of ease"—to become nurses and foster-mothers of our own selves.

Self-consciousness and self-consequence are more inseparably allied than we like to think. One who was at once a "sweet singer" and a deep thinker thus wrote:—

" We're wrong always when we think too much
Of what we think or are ; albeit our thoughts
Be verily as bitter as self-sacrifice,
We're no less selfish. If we sleep on rocks
Or roses, sleeping past the hour of noon
We're lazy."

ELIZABETH BROWNING.

Self-consciousness and self-consequence necessarily unite themselves into a mischievous triumvirate with self-assertion, always conspiring AGAINST the true Monarch of self, of which we see a fatal but common example in Moab, who, "at ease from his youth," and "exceeding proud," was "destroyed from being a people because he magnified himself against the Lord." (Jer. xlviii. 11, 29, 42.) To which again we have the contrast of Paul, whose earnest hope and expectation was that CHRIST should be magnified in his body, whether living or dying. (Phil. i. 20.)

With this feminine tendency to cherish our individual selves, it is strange how, *when it suits us*, we manage to escape from individuality into generality. It is those, indeed, most prone to "the I and the me of self," who shrink most from the "I" and the

"Thou" of close dealing with God, and who know least of the "my" of what the old divines call "appropriating faith,"—such as the seven *mys* of David (Ps. cxliv. 2), and the satisfied declaration of Thomas, "MY Lord and MY God!" Nothing between our individuality and that of God!

In the same Psalm and verse David shows another phase of appropriating trust, which we are often very deficient in. "He in whom I trust, who subdueth MY people under me." Those strongest intrenched in old self are the least pleased to individualize their own enemies: *i.e.*, their special sins. They talk well about *a* "war" with sin, but they do not come to particulars about "*the* war." (See margin of *v. 1.*) They acknowledge the number of spiritual enemies to be subdued, but they do not specify "MY people" that have to be subdued "under ME." Above all—and is there one of us who cannot plead guilty?—we very specially dislike other people pointing out any particular "*mys*" in this direction. The Bible says that "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," but *we* say that such wounds are disagreeable, rude, and unnecessary.

I find a beautiful instance of faithful dealing, and of meek acceptance of it, with the blessed consequences, in the experience of Madame Guyon,—

that gifted woman who was distinguished by high position, rich intellect, and great beauty of person. A faithful messenger came to her help in a time of great spiritual struggle, and she says, "I know not how it was, but he seemed in some way to have acquired a remarkable knowledge of my character; and, while he recognized all that was good in me, he felt it his duty to speak to me plainly of my faults. He told me that I was too fond of my personal attractions; and enumerated one after another the various faults and imperfections of my life." Aroused and startled, she gave herself anew to the Lord—to be His in body and in spirit—to be His in personal effort and influence—to be His in all that she was, and in all that it was possible for her to be. There was no reserve. The first thing He did was to smite her beauty with that dreadful scourge the small-pox. When it was discovered that the hand of the Lord was thus upon her, her friends exhibited great emotion, and almost forgetting that her life was in danger, deplored in feeling language the mysterious and fatal attack which was thus made upon charms which had been so celebrated. "But," she says, "the devastation without was counterbalanced by peace within. Reminded continually of one of the causes of my religious trials and falls, I indulged the hope of

regaining my inward liberty by the loss of that outward beauty which had been my grief. This view of my condition rendered my soul so well-satisfied, that it would not have exchanged its condition for that of the most happy prince in the world.*

It is interesting to compare the testimony of Madame Guyon, as to the consecration of self, with that of other "chief women." Among others "not a few," we find Lady Jean Campbell of Aberuchil thus writing in a diary:—"At Ardestie y^e 2nd of March, 1690, on Sabath, at one o'clock in y^e afternoon.—"Let the Lord my Righteousness be my strength, and in His name I again lift up mine hand to the Most High, solemnlie protesting before y^e Lord, that I soe avouch Thee to be my God, and soe intirly and unreservedly make over my SELF unto Thee, that through the grace of God with me, I will henceforth, and while I live, be y^e avowed enemy of a worldlie heart and life. I will use all Thy means for y^e overcoming of it. I give my SELF, my estate, my strength, my parts, my time, all that I have, unto the Lord. Lord, take me at my word, and all that I have for Thy service. I am Thine: save me."

In a biographical sketch of the Duchess de

* Abridged from "Life of Madame Guyon."

Broglie, daughter of Madame de Stael, we find an interesting record of a "chief woman," entirely devoted to the service of God ; so that even in the atmosphere of a French court "she never forgot to show Whose she was and Whom she served. She spoke out, but with admirable meekness and discretion ; and, in a sphere where it is perhaps difficult to serve God openly, and to follow Christ faithfully, she walked humbly with her God, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Her character was thus finely described : 'She was truly humble, for her thoughts were habitually fixed, not upon those gifts and graces which she possessed in the sight of men, but upon those which she lacked in the sight of God.'" Within a few days of the close of her beautiful life, the Duchess de Broglie wrote to a friend, about whose spiritual safety she was anxious, and who was allowing the imperfection of churches and creeds to be stumbling-blocks in his way, and made a confession of the individual dealings between her own self and God, whence came her living faith and faithful life. "I take the Gospel and examine it as if it were addressed to *myself alone*, for the question, after all, is between God and my own soul. Other men's opinions can neither save me nor destroy me. I therefore grasp the hand stretched

forth to save me ; I pray for the Holy Spirit to renew me. The faith of other Christians strengthens my own : their holiness affects and edifies me. But were I alone in the world,—were there neither historical proofs of the Gospel, nor church, nor preachers,—this Gospel would be none the less necessary to my own soul, whether in life or in death”* In these snatches of autobiography we see good examples of the true place of Self restored from its state of usurpation,—not monarch but subject, though still individual. It must be given over to another: “Ye are not your own ; ye are bought with a price.” Oh, what a glorious certainty of happiness, victory, and service, this thought opens up ! “Not our own,” yet our own selves still ! Wonderful, yet blessed anomaly, thus explained by the Apostle: “By the grace of God *I* am what I am : . . . yet *not I*, but the grace of God which was with me.” “*I* live ; yet *not I*, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (1 Cor. xv. 10 ; Gal. ii. 20.)

“Oh, true self raised to true unselfishness,
Living for Him alone, who is thy life.” †

* Abridged from “Sunday at Home.”

† “Yesterday, To-day, and For Ever,” by Rev. E. Bickersteth.

Many think that such a happy new self and Christ-life is too good news to be true. The fickleness, the wavering, the worldliness of the old conscious self is so great, that they feel that if they are happy to-day they are sure to be miserable to-morrow. Ah, but they forget it is another self, another indweller,—“a principle of life which renders the change permanent;” and it is a happy transfer. Many things are spoken and written about self-sacrifice in these days, which are open to misunderstanding. I knew a lady who for years could not bring herself to pray for holiness, so afraid was she of being answered by “terrible things in righteousness;” while another could not bear, for the same reason, to sing those lines of the well-known hymn,—

“Nearer to Thee, my God,
Nearer to Thee,
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Nearer to Thea.”

But Christianity is not so distinctly self-sacrificing as self-giving and Christ-receiving. It is imperfect giving that causes the bitterness of sacrifice; the true wife knows not the word in her home life. With Christ, not standing at the door but dwelling in the innermost recesses of home and heart, we may well leave the future to Him; His yoke

is easy and His burden is light: the ways in which He walks with us are pleasantness and peace. Should trials, griefs, crosses, and even "terrible things" be in these paths, the terror will, and must be taken out of them. It is when we walk alone, and thus when the old self gets uppermost, that we lose our joy and feel our sacrifices. Oh, dear friends, before whom stretches a noble life of possible service and influence, do not dream of living it out either happily or usefully, till you have "FIRST given your own selves to the Lord" as chief sinners; for, from those to whom much has been given, from them, surely, much sorrow of heart is natural, for the long past of many misused talents. Then the very individuality of each chief woman pardoned, changed, and newly gifted, the Lord will use as a door into many hearts and homes which are closed to other missionaries, and of each will these lines be true,—

"Not for herself: 'twas in the Lord,
Her calm heart leaning on His Word:
His love, the joy which makes her strong;
In darkest night her quiet song;
Through all her life one undertone,
That whispers softly, 'Not your own.'"

H. BOWMAN.

III.

Vanity of Vanities.



“Love not the world,
Its dreams, its songs, its lies ;
They who have followed in its train are not
The true and good and wise.
Seek not the world !
’Tis a vain stand at best :
Bow not before its idol shrine. In God
Find thou thy joy and rest.”

H. BONAR.

Vanity of Vanities.

"The customs of the people are vain."—JER. x. 3.

BAD company! A strange topic which I am about to bring before chief women. "Very suitable," some one will say, "for an appeal to the young men and young girls of the nearest village; but not for the carefully-guarded denizens of saloon and boudoir." Let us examine into King David's ideas on this subject, as given in that peculiarly practical Psalm (cxliv.) which I quoted last month. After the repeated profession of his appropriating faith in God as *his* strength, *his* goodness, *his* fortress, *his* high tower, *his* deliverer, *his* shield, he goes on to pour out petition after petition in the sublime language of Hebrew prayer and poetry combined, which are employed against some mighty foe: "Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down cast forth lightnings and scatter them send Thine hand from above and deliver me."

Who, then, were these enemies, so powerful as to warrant these striking appeals for aid?—these individualized enemies of “*the war*,”—“*my people*,” who are striving to get above “*me*”? (Ver. 2.) Not, it would appear, the great nations, or even the powerful conspirators who fought against David’s regal power, nor that discontented, ungodly, and openly wicked company with whom he shut himself up in the Cave of Adullam, and suffered in consequence so much spiritual loss.* From verses 9, 10, it would appear as if this Psalm were written after those days of outward distress and persecution had ceased, during a period of inner “*Sturm und Drang*,” caused by the enemies whom he was encountering in his quieter days of palace life. In verses 7—11 we find the explanation: “Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children,”—enemies that did not look like enemies,—bad company, in short, though more refined than the wild and ungodly men of the Cave; nothing worse said of them, indeed, than vanity and falsehood, twice repeated. David, deeply taught of God, however, recognised in these strange children worse, because more subtle, enemies than the beasts of prey or the men of war

* It is interesting to compare 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2, with Ps. lvii. and Ps. cxlii.

that had oppressed him from his youth upward. So instead of designating their vanities and falsehoods as little sins, white lies, or innocent conventionalities, he prays against them with all the force of his mighty spirit.

It is this refined bad company, these "strange children,"—strange to God and to His ways and thoughts,—whose "customs are vain," whose lives are made up of falsity, who are the worst enemies of the matrons and the daughters of our upper classes.

Mere vanity! Why it is a very venial sin, if sin at all, in our modern estimation, even when it goes hand in hand with its well-nigh inseparable companion, falsity. These two we find linked together in some of the special revelations of the social dominion of vanity made by David; by the old prophets,—those close social observers; and by Job,—the grand old man who, from under his kingly diadem, had noticed more keenly perhaps the vanities of others than his own. "Vanity and lies" is ever the tale told by those who have been dealt with by God, after having entered most deeply into the world's temptations and fascinations.

I may point to a few false features of "Society." Take dress, for instance, which assumes a position of such misplaced importance in public thought,

time, and expenditure. Well-nigh each fashion has been invented to pretend a beauty, or, in other words, to make a lie. Patches in old days to profess an unblemished complexion, high heels to give stately height to the insignificant, chignons to pretend a wealth of tresses, hair-dyes to hide the appearance of age, and so on,—all so completely integral parts of society that “nobody thinks them wrong, so why should I?” When such a query is put, as is often the case, by those who are most virtuously indignant at newer falsities, such as Madame Rachel’s enamels, one can see very clearly how deeply rooted is the false principle. Or listen to our conversation;—“There is surely no harm in saying little things that one doesn’t mean, for it makes one so much more popular,” as I have heard it frankly confessed. Hence the civilities, the flatteries, the exaggerations, the false statements which are thought nothing of. Or look at the false estimation of things. Beauty, for instance, either in the possession, or failure, or lack of it. Take that celebrated beauty of other days, who, when dying of consumption, lay on a couch with a looking-glass beside her, and when the last remnant of her loveliness faded, shut herself up and would see no one, not even her nurse, except by lamplight. “An extreme case.” Yes: but equally proceeding

from the false value of a gift lent to those who all agree are but to be on the face of the earth for a "little while." Or there is the estimation in which rank and distinctions,—whether by hereditary gift, which people cannot help receiving, or acquired by use of natural gifts: is there not a false principle at work somewhere?—the gift part of either transaction ignored in favour of the act of possession, and hence strange falsities as to the Giver and the use to be made of His gifts? We may smile with the historian at the two Flemish dames of high degree who were so determined not to abate a jot or tittle of their rights of precedence that they always appeared in public arm in arm, and when as related in old French, "*Si l'on rencontre une porte trop estroicte, l'on se serre l'ung sur l'autre pour passer également par ensamble, affin qu'il n'y ayt du devant ou derrière!*" But is there not something of the same falsity of importance afloat amongst those who know that they have soon to lie down in the grave, where there is neither coronet nor precedence nor distinctions, earned or inherited? Or take the extent of luxury. Could it possess its present place were there not some false estimate of our position in God's creation? It is related of the Duchess of Albany that on her death-bed she, uttered a certain memorable thanksgiving, of which

the first head was that "she had always had the best wines," and the second that "she had always had a good cook." Since then, however, things have progressed rapidly, and few persons think of thanking God for what are supposed to be absolute needs of life, no matter what "luxury of doing good" may have to be sacrificed in consequence. Take also amusement, which, however people may differ as to the kinds of it, certainly ought, unless some great falsity has crept into our language, to imply not work, but relaxation from work. Society, however, ignores this truth, and falsely turns it into hard work,—so hard sometimes as to kill or render unhealthy for life some of our fairest daughters.

If asked the *cui bono* of the toils, the anxious thought, the worries and disappointments, some, if in the Palace of Truth, might perchance answer, "Anything : anything to be in the fashion !" "Opinion," in short, is still the "rate of things,"—opinion, too, founded upon falsity, and opposed to the Divine command, "Be not of the same opinion as the world." *

All these things, however, are but manifestations of a deeper falsity, and are but as the living leaves

* Another reading sometimes given of Rom. xii. 2.

and twigs which bear unfailing testimony that there is a living root. It is remarkable that in that wonderful autobiographical dissection both of self and contemporary society, the book of Ecclesiastes, there is not one specific mention of the falsity and deceit of vanity, as in other Scriptural writers. Solomon, indeed, goes at once to the point, for when he begins with "vanity of vanities," he concludes "all IS vanity" (Eccles. i. 2—15), strikingly corroborated by the historical records of Israel: "They followed vanity and *became* vain."† But it is in the details of one expectation of solid good after another proving false and futile, that we are left to read the lesson aright in these startling revelations of Solomon's unsatisfactory life. Whether it were music or architecture, laughter or labour, wealth or wisdom, knowledge or regal power, reason or religiousness, the same truth shed its searching light upon all. "That which IS crooked cannot be made straight, and that which IS wanting cannot be numbered." Here is a strangely graphic corroboration of his experience. Madame de Maintenon thus wrote,—"Why can I not give you my experience? Why can I not make you sensible of that weariness which preys upon the great, and the

† Jer. ii. 5; 2 Kings xvii. 15.

difficulty they labour under to employ their time? Do you not see that I am dying with melancholy in a height of fortune which once my imagination could scarce have conceived? I have been young, and have been a universal object of love; in a more advanced age I have spent years in intellectual pleasures. I have at last risen to royal favour; but I protest to you that every one of these conditions leaves in the mind a dismal vacuity."

Another woman of literary powers gives us the following testimony at the age of eighty: "For my own part I only find that many things I knew I have forgotten, many things I thought I knew I find I knew nothing about; some things I know I have found not worth knowing; and some things I would give,—oh, what would one *not* give to know?—are beyond the reach of human ken." Here is yet another, who in an unusual manner penetrated the depths of science—the many-gifted Princess-Palatine, Elizabeth of Bohemia—the friend and almost equal of Descartes, the celebrated French philosopher. Her biographer, herself one of many brilliant social and mental gifts, thus writes: "Science had pretty well afforded to her intelligence all the comfort and support whereof it was capable, and the satisfaction of being appre-

ciated by those competent to judge, and revered for her vast acquirements (a sentiment quite distinct from vanity), had been awarded her to its utmost extent. With Elizabeth, however, it was as with all elevated minds,—the more she mastered the less she felt she knew, and the stronger the light thrown around her by science the more it served to show the wretched exiguity of the spot illuminated, and the infinite depths of the impenetrable beyond. She sickened at the miserable emptiness of all earthly knowledge, gathering therefrom but one truth: that she knew nothing.”*

“ And these are the high idols of this world !
Retreating shadows caught but at the grave,
Mocking delusions changing at the tomb :
Of one false spirit the false children all ;
And yet what God-like gifts neglected lie
Wasting and marr’d in the forgotten soul ! ”

N. P. WILLIS.

Life experiences such as the above form indeed the closest commentary on such Scripture words as the following: “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” (Isaiah lv. 3.) “The

* “Memoirs of the Princess-Palatine,” by the Baroness Blaze de Bury.

people shall labour in the very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity." (Hab. ii. 13.) "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because they know not how to go to the city." (Eccl. x. 15.)

"Vanity of vanities,
ALL is vanity."

There is, then, a root of falsehood which would remain false were every green leaf and twig cut off. Abolish balls and theatres, shut up our gay dresses in convents, substitute "lenten kail" for entrées and champagne, and worldly society would still be false. Why? Because the root is a practical unbelief in God's Word, found in those who profess to believe it. Many in these days frankly acknowledge their unbelief, and openly disavow God's Word as His, and therefore are at least honest and consistent in not making it their standard. Others live in utter disregard of it, yet pay unwilling homage, and start and tremble when sickness and possible death come before them; nay, I have seen some such weep in vexation and alarm at the very mention of the coming again of the Lord in glory. But I do not allude to these classes, but to the perfectly orthodox as well as perfectly respectable, without a trace of sympathy, it may be, for the

doubts and struggles of those of shaken faith or sore temptations. They read the Bible, and profess to believe in its inspiration; they attend Church and Communion, and do many good deeds; only their words are as unlike God's words as those of the deist or infidel. SUCH say, "We can serve God and the world." GOD says, "Ye cannot serve two masters."—THEY say, "It is only a few bigots and hypocrites who denounce the world and its vanities." GOD Himself gives Satan two significant titles: "The prince of this world," and the "father of lies."—THEY say, "There is no need of a change in our tastes, habits, and opinions." GOD said of a high-minded sinner who had been at ease from his youth, "His taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.—THEREFORE," etc. (Jer. xlviii. 11, 12, etc.) THEY say, "It will all come right in the end." GOD says, "What ye sow ye shall also reap;" and a striking thought He also gives,—the reaping will be MORE than the sowing, even as the mighty harvests of the earth spring from small, insignificant seeds. "If they sow the wind they shall reap the whirlwind." (Hosea viii. 7.) If we sow nothings (Is. xli. 29) the harvest will not be nothings also, but "a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow." (Is. xvii. 11.) The "vain show" will have a substantial end, the neglected "word that I have

spoken" will turn into a real judgment, "in the last day." (John xii. 48.)

Oh, dear friends, stop in your false career. This is not a life,—so full of real sorrow, suffering, and death,—to give up to the "vanities of the Gentiles." This creation, the very winds, stones, and plants of which are so full of grand truths and subject to such substantial laws, is not a fit sphere for lying and lawless nothings,—for seedtimes of thistle-down. This God in Christ is not a God to trifle with. Not only His Word is true, but He Himself is the "Very Truth." "If it were not so I would have told you," said He, with sweetest, humblest sincerity. "A man who hath told you the truth," He also described Himself, adding the searching question, "And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" (John viii. 40—46.) Come, then, NOW, and deal honestly with this truthful God, who, unlike us, *always means what He says*. I know well that many a one, apparently sunk in "vain show," longs for reality, and confesses, in bitterness of spirit, that—

"No joy is true save that which hath no end,
No life is true save that which liveth ever,
No health is sound save that which God doth send,
No love is real save that which faileth never."

I know well, also, how by reason of long habit

the "bad company," customs, vanities, and falsities of the world grow to be like strong ropes and chains round even those souls who desire to escape from their surroundings, so unreal, yet in one sense so terribly real. And to such one can but point to that WORD which ever does what is promised. There we read that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make *a way to escape* that ye may be able to bear it,—wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." (1 Cor. x. 13, 14.) We may not see how, but God has ways and means for preventing any soul being kept in an unwilling bondage where it cannot serve Him in truth and honesty, for the truth is to "make us free." Contemporary history throws a vivid light on some of God's "ways of escape." Without this light Christ's command to His believing Jewish people reads strangely: "WHEN ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies . . . THEN let them which are in the midst of it DEPART OUT" (Luke xxi. 20, 21), —the very time that it would seem impossible. But God had provided "a way of escape." Unexpectedly, and without any reason being assigned, Titus withdrew his armies for a truce of two days, during which time those who wished to obey their Lord's command departed out of the city in safety.

And so He will do now to His believing people, even when encircled by the armed pomps and glories of the world.

But remember that the way of escape does not necessarily lead us outside of the position in which God has given us "a charge to keep,"—though it does and must lead us out of the falsities and vanities heaped in it and around it. The "peculiar people" must be peculiar *IN* the world, though not *OF* it, "*EVEN AS*"—ponder it well—"even as *I* am not of the world"—"sent" into the world, messengers into the world, "*EVEN as Thou hast sent Me into the world.*" (John xvii. 14—18.) What lesson or example need we more? No wonder that, following this rule, there was a Church in Babylon and saints in the palace of Nero!

Messengers are still needed,—messengers are scanty and few in the drawing-rooms and in the stately mansions of Great Britain. Chief women, will ye not first renounce the "customs of the people," and then bear the message by spoken word, by speaking works, by Christ-like adornments? There is a principle which God loves and signally honours in His Word. It is that which first sent forth the Bible-woman into the slums of London, and the black missionary to the isles of the heathen; it was that which first taught a lesson of healing

and physical blessing to Hahnemann and his disciples, "Like curing like." THIS is what we want to-day. Who will go forth with the healing message to her peers, as contained in "GOD'S GREAT MEDICINE BOOK FULL OF RECIPES FOR EVERY SPIRITUAL MALADY?" *

* Rev. Augustus Hare, "Memorials of a Quiet Life."

IV.

Without and Within.

"Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet ?
Oh, let us in, that we may kiss His feet !
No, no : too late, too late !"

"For thee, His royal bride, for thee
His brightest glories shine ;
And, happier still, His changeless heart
With all its love, is thine."

Without and Within.

“Them that are without.”—MARK iv. 11.

“They shall enter into the King’s palace.”—Ps. xlv. 15.

WITHOUT and within the palace! A very real difference in social life. “Not received at Court” is a serious ban, for it is only said when some decided flaw in character renders such a prohibition necessary. Or in other cases, when from indolence or dislike of expense, admittance to Court has not been sought, the inconvenience is sometimes felt by travellers, for those “not presented” at home cannot be admitted to foreign Courts, although there be no fault in character and position. To those who receive an appointment at Court there is also a decided difference: when once fairly within the palace all its ways and etiquettes become familiar,—a certain “ability to stand in the palace” (Dan. i. 4) is understood beforehand, and a readiness to do “whatsoever the King shall appoint” (2 Sam.

xv. 15) is essential. But to the Queen of a realm the difference is still more distinct the day she first "enters into the palace." The difference is great even to those who come from one palace as maiden Princess to another as Queenly bride. How minute and graphic the accounts in history of royal nuptials! And the moment when a new-made Queen enters the palace-gates, and thus begins her reign, is always specially noticed with its accompaniments of pealing trumpets and the enthusiastic welcomes of a nation. There are circumstances moreover in which this moment is still more intensified: when, for instance, a Queen suddenly takes that position from a private station in life. One day in old times a woman simply clad, although of noble beauty and mien, presented herself at the entrance of a magnificent edifice of alabaster and ivory, gems and gold,—the palace of the Roman Cæsars. The sentinels demanded her name and business, and she answered with simplicity that she was Plotina Pompeia, the wife of Trajan,—Trajan, the new Cæsar, who but an hour or two before had entered both city and palace on foot, like a simple soldier, with a few faithful followers. A moment, and the difference in that woman's position was great. Eagles fluttered, banners waved, and plaudits rang all around, as the "Augusta Diva" of the

future entered into the palace as the Empress of Rome, showing in history amidst most of her peers "as a white dove trooping among crows."

An instance still more defined we may see in Bathildis, Queen of Clovis II., King of the Franks, who ascended the throne from being but a young Kentish slave girl. It was written in her praise : "Queen,—she never forgot that she had been a slave : " not in false humility, or by retaining servile habits ; no : but by striving to abolish slavery in France ; and, though unsuccessful, doing much to ameliorate the condition of the enslaved. It was a distinctive moment, indeed, for herself and for others, when she entered into her palace.

Most of us know well, even if we think little about it, that there is a time coming when those who are ready *will enter* in to the palace of the Kingly Bridegroom, and sit down at the nuptial feast, and that, the door being then shut, those that are not ready *will be* without. (Matt. xxv. 10.) It is generally acknowledged, also, that further on in the ages, some *will be* within the pearly gates of the Palatial City, while others *will be* without, in that awful category which concludes with "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. xxii. 14, 15) : a serious difference truly between God's estimate of sin and that of the world ! Then also being

within or without the visible Church of God, described as a "palace" in the Old Testament (1 Chron. xxix. 1), is a distinction clearly acknowledged, even by the most worldly. We may be within the fence of a Church, however, by received formulas, such as baptism, infant or adult, or by partaking of the Holy Communion, and yet "stand without," desiring in vain even to speak to Christ the King. The visible palace of the Church, beautiful as it may be and most desirable to enter in, without the individually received warmth and light of the Holy Spirit will be but as the caverns of the great glaciers, which are described as of palatial beauty, but in which unwary travellers are oftentimes frozen to death.

But there is another and a more decisive "within and without" in the solemn present, which comes not always "with observation," yet on it depends that of the immutable future. Six times in the New Testament this great present difference is distinctly stated,—once by our Lord Himself, and always in the same four words: "Them that ARE without." In CHRIST! This is the palace life of to-day. Outside of CHRIST! That is the exclusion from the Court of the King.

No charge meets us more frequently than this: "Good people are so uncharitable,"—generally heard

from those who are busiest in the supervision of their Christian neighbours. And the point of supposed want of charity is always founded on the faintest hint of this very distinction of "without and within," even when, or rather still more if (as ought ever to be) it is accompanied by the gentlest efforts to bring others into the happy abiding-place.

But there are two forms of charity: the real jewel, and that made of glass or paste. Here is a description of the counterfeit:—

"There is love which veileth ever
All errors of all men,
And calls it holy charity
To keep evil from their ken.

"There is love which never telleth
The slumbering and the blind
That they rest 'mid burning rafters,
Lest they should not think it kind.

"Ah, but such love and lovers
Are made of clay and pelf:
They are altars for an idol,—
And that idol's name is SELF."

The real was well exemplified by the chained Apostle, when he said before Agrippa and his Queen, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

The mock gem belongs to the world, and that of real price and pure water belongs to God. Accordingly in His blessed Word we have the clear and distinct "uncharitable" truth that "in Christ," and in Him only, is safety and happiness. The whole Scriptures are full of the wonderful thought of the finite abiding in the Infinite. Moses saw it dimly when he said that "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." (Deut. xxxiii. 12.) Hannah exulted in it more than in her heaven-sent babe, though still seeing "as in a glass." (1 Sam. ii. 1, 2.) David rejoiced in it when he called the Lord his safe hiding-place, his tower, his place of defence, and (beautiful with the thought of the every-day home) his DWELLING PLACE and his HABITATION. (Ps. lxxi. 3; xc. 1.) Christ Himself commands in the clearest manner, "Abide in Me," not only for successful work (John xv. 4), for answered prayer (verse 7), for joyful living (verse 11), but for actual safety. "If a man abide NOT in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." (Verse 6.) The Apostles closely follow up this grand subject. Notice how often "in Christ" occurs throughout the Epistles, especially in Ephesians and Colossians, and take this one declaration of its effects in

safety, happiness, and holiness: "Of Him are ye IN Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (I Cor. i. 30.) It is from that gigantic evil to which I have already alluded (practical unbelief in God's Word by those who profess to believe in its inspiration), that so many spiritual hindrances come in the way either of those who are honestly wishing to turn their faces Zionward, or those who have actually done so.

Once genuinely believe this twin Scriptural doctrine, and all difficulties vanish: "*Come to ME*," and "*Abide in ME*." It is not only, remark, as a drowning man enters the life-boat, or the dweller in a burning house enters the fire-escape,—for men do not dwell or abide in either of those temporary refuges; in the Divine "remaining-place" safety is combined with the graces and beauties of palace life. When once the dividing line is crossed,—distinct as the threshold of the bride's new palace, and named by theologians CONVERSION,—the soul enters from the world into Christ. But this is not all. Then, and not till then, begins the beautifying and preparative process which is not to end till "EVERY WHIT" (Ps. xxix. 9, marg.) of the believer "uttereth glory," till the bride is "ALL glorious within." (Ps. xlv. 13.) Some who quite believe in

the efficacy of Christ as the fire-escape, the life-boat, or, in other words, who accept of Him as their justification and redemption, stumble at the further truth that if we are in Him, He is also to be our daily wisdom and our daily sanctification. "We are so weak," say these half-believers; "Satan is so strong; the 'vain customs' of the world so imperative; the habits of unlikeness to Christ so deeply rooted—how can *we* be specially holy? All we can expect is to be 'saved as by fire.'" I once heard a depressed old Scotchwoman say, "If I can just get into the kitchen of one of the many mansions, I'm thinking that'll be all;" and such false humility, less quaintly expressed, is very common, in strong contrast to the ABUNDANT ENTRANCE promised in 2 Pet. i. 11.

Nothing is more remarkable in Scripture than the two sides of its firmly-compacted truths, and much loss is suffered by those who, something like the knight of old, look only on the one. Here then comes in the other side of this great truth of our abiding in Christ. Not only is it said, "Abide in Me," but "I in you." How is He to abide in us? as weakness or as strength? "Seek the Lord and HIS strength," and then will come the answer, "MY strength is made perfect *in* weakness." (Ps. cv. 4; 2 Cor. xii. 9.) He is "Christ, the POWER of

God"—as a changing, transforming, beautifying, and glorifying power. Is this mysticism, or is it "some new thing"? No: it is but believing that the Word of God is true. "Come and see," "Come and taste," "Come unto ME," "Open the door" when Christ stands without and knocks; and it will be your blessed experience, as it has been of many who have abided and who are still abiding in Him and He in them.

In looking over the records of "chief women," in old as well as recent times, we find distinct statements of these or analogous truths. Young and beautiful, a betrothed bride, loving and beloved, Clementine Cuvier, the daughter of Baron Cuvier, the celebrated French naturalist, found herself attacked by deadly disease while preparations were going on for her marriage. Yet even in such circumstances she could give forth such utterances as these: "The sacrifice of Christ is adequate to all the wants of my soul, and since I have been able to depend on it, I experience a calmness and felicity which nothing else can give. My heart is quite full; and I now understand the words of the angel, 'Glory be to God on high; and on earth peace, good will towards men.' . . . I am convinced that without Divine grace I can do nothing; but the thought that this grace is ever within me, that it

surrounds, supports, and defends me, inspires me with confidence. I then feel that faith in Christ can alone fill the void which I have sometimes experienced in my soul."

A new-made widow, Elizabeth, the last Duchess of Gordon, stood beside her husband's grave among the picturesque ruins of Elgin Cathedral, and afterwards wrote: "When the coffin was lowered into that vault, I felt as if God had shoved under my feet all that was most dear to me, the only one on earth to whose love I was entitled, and that now I must live to Himself alone." It was recorded of her twenty-one years afterwards, that "her whole succeeding life was embraced in the resolve then and there made. Her Maker was now her only husband in heaven and on earth. He had now her whole heart and mind, body and soul. 'Lord, Thou art Master in this house; I have given it all to Thee.' So said she often in her prayers as a pleading with God. She kept back no part of the price: her rank and its influence, her position in society, her wealth, and even her best thoughts and best deeds—all were God's."

It does not need, however, sickness, death, and bereavement for this living union with Christ as the King of our hearts and homes.

We find a royal Christian lady thus consecrating

her own new palace home: "Thou hast prepared for us this palace, O Lord, and Thou hast entered it with us: we are sure of this. Oh, dwell in it from generation to generation! Bless this abode, and be Thou always its head and master! May no member of our race ever deny Thee, and suffer not one of them to perish."*

A still more valuable illustration of this abiding Presence in the morning, noon, and evening of life, may be found in the biography of one of our Scottish "elect ladies," who, though living in the turbulent times of Scotland, and taking the side of the Covenanters, led such a retired life that she is little known among the more stirring records of our heroic "chief women." Lady Catherine Hamilton was born at Hamilton Palace in 1662. Brought up in the strictest "nurture and admonition of the Lord," her heart was early impressed with Divine truth; and at the age of eighteen, she thus wrote in her diary: "Oh, my soul, remember Friday, the 18th of November, 1681, and Thursday, the 24th, wherein the Lord thy God was pleased to give thee sweetest consolation in Himself, and some assurance of His reconciled countenance at Hamilton." Two

* "The Christian Princess." *Memoirs of the Grand Duchess Augusta.*

years glided away in a young ladyhood rare and precious indeed; for of how few "girls" in this or even that "period" could it be said as of her, "Christ she then chose as her Saviour, God as her portion, the Divine glory as her chief end, the Divine law as her infallible guide; and from her God and Saviour she sought and found grace and strength to proceed in the Christian course." In 1683 she became the wife of Lord Murray, afterwards Duke of Athol. For some years she resided in Falkland Palace, where her beloved husband was seized with dangerous illness, on which occasion she wrote: "Be Thou in place of all unto me, blessed Jesus, and let never any idol be in my heart, where Thou oughtest to be in the chief room. But Thou hast not only allowed of a lawful love to my husband, but commanded me to have it. Therefore it is lawful and my duty to pray for him. Spare him, O Lord, for Christ's sake, and bless him with long life in this world, that he may glorify Thee in his generation, and be an instrument of doing good to the people among whom Thou hast set him, and be a blessing to his family."

The Duchess of Athol was ever careful to sanctify the Lord's-day, and very specially also those communion seasons which are so apt to become mere formalities. Thus in prospect of the Lord's

Supper she writes,—“This day I was reading John xvi. 23, 24: ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you.’ Oh, gracious promise! Then I began to think what it was I would ask of God. The thought that immediately occurred to me was, Jesus Christ to dwell in my heart by faith and love. Methought that if God would put it in my offer to have all the universe, with all the glory, honour, riches, and splendour of it, I would rather have Christ to be my King, Priest, and Prophet, than have it all. Oh, that He would always rule in me and conquer all His and my enemies,—my corruptions, temptations, and sins, I mean,—and always assist and strengthen me to serve Him faithfully and uprightly! Now, blessed Jesus, *this* is my petition and my request: Fulfil Thy word to me,—Thou art faithful that hath promised.” Some days after this she wrote: “When I was at Thy communion-table, it was said by the minister,—I doubt not by Thy guiding and directing Spirit,—‘*What* is your request, and *what* is your petition?’ Then it occurred unto me what I had done before, to entreat Jesus Christ to dwell in my heart by faith, and there (at the Lord’s table) I did, Thou knowest, accept of the Lord as my covenanted God.”

Year by year, according to the quaint and serious

fashion and phraseology of the day, we find her renewing "this my covenant with my God." In 1697 the Duke and Duchess of Athol went to reside for some time at Kensington, and in the midst even of life at Court much of her time was spent in reading the Scriptures, in spiritual meditation, in self-examination, and prayer. Her earnest desires and endeavours, as might be expected, were directed in behalf of her children. Of her eldest son she records her desire "not only that he might be accomplished in every kind of secular learning, but that, as God had distinguished him by a high birth in this world, He would also confer upon him the higher distinction of being holy in character and a promoter of true holiness," adding, "I have resigned him and all the rest of my children wholly to be the Lord's. Oh, accept of the gift as far as they are mine to give! They are Thine by creation: oh, let them be Thine by adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and redemption!"

Hamilton Palace was endeared in a special manner to the Duchess of Athol. There she was born naturally, there she was born spiritually, there she married, and there she returned to die, being unexpectedly seized with illness when on a visit to her mother during the absence of her husband, and "as her life had been eminently holy, so her latter

end was peace." Her one desire was, in most oppressive weakness, "but for as much strength as that I may declare the goodness of God to me." When the sure covenant of Christ was mentioned she said sweetly, and they were her last words, "*That* is all my salvation and all my desire." She died in January, 1707, in the forty-fifth year of her age.*

It has been beautifully said, "The very pith and essence of the Gospel is contained in two words, 'Whosoever' (John iii. 15), for those WITHOUT, and 'Whatsoever' (John xiv. 13; xv. 14), for those WITHIN." This inner palace life and training is indeed THE only cure for the "abundance of idleness" (Ezekiel xvi. 49) existing in our chief mothers and daughters. There is not to be a working IN to the palace, for it is as much free grace and love in every case as the elevation of the slave-queen of Clovis, but there is to be a working OUT from the palace, even as she (without fear of imputed "uncharitableness") worked thence for the enslaved daughters of her people.

In this, too, is the only cure for the listless and joyless existence of our "unworking classes." Thorns come up in the palaces of the earth (Isaiah

* Abridged from "The Ladies of the Covenant."

xxxiv. 13); the spider taketh hold of the rafters thereof (Prov. xxx. 28); death and desolation may and must enter therein (Jer. ix. 21); but in the safe abiding place with Christ the King is full joy, and fuller hope. "Live nobly first, then joyous if you may," it has been sung; but in *this* happy life the joy follows as a sure corollary.

" 'Abide in ME,' or peace will leave thee,
Love and joy will droop and die;
Sins and fears again will grieve thee,
Soon the song becomes the sigh.

" 'Abide in ME,' the branch must wither
Parted from the parent tree;
Fruit and freshness altogether,
Spring, and only spring, from ME!

" 'Abide in ME,' and what can harm thee?
All is under my control;
Death itself need not alarm thee,
I myself will keep thy soul."

V.

Palace Clothing.



“Thy righteousness, O Christ,
Alone can cover me ;
No righteousness avails
Save that which is of Thee.

“Thy righteousness alone
Can clothe and beautify :
I wrap it round my soul,—
In this I'll live and die.”

Palace Clothing.

"The King's daughter is all glorious within : her clothing is of wrought gold."—Ps. xlv. 13.

"Thou also hast wrought all our works in us."—ISA. xxvi. 12.

TWO arguments against the love of fashionable dress are generally brought forward by those who act as censors of public or private behaviour. Its low origin is often dwelt on, as in Watts' good old hymn,—

"The art of dress did ne'er begin
Till Eve our mother learnt to sin,"—

while others moralize over the folly of being absorbed in such an insignificant object. But there is another reason which I wonder is not oftener pressed : not the insignificance of dress,—but the very high and solemn position which it holds in the Word of God. Originally, indeed, a sign-token of sin,—with the marvellous alchemy of Scripture, it is transmuted into a most precious gift and

symbol. How solemn the use of the first broidered robes and hems, and the first lace and fringe and ribbon, and the cunning work of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen ! (Ex. xxviii. ; Num. xv. 38—41.) Long afterwards, when under the symbol of a fair woman, God spoke of His back-sliding people, how touchingly minute is His description: "I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. . . . But . . . of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours." (Ezek. xvi. 10—16.)

There is a clothing frequently spoken of in Scripture as of the most extreme importance ; so much so, that without it every soul of man would be standing now, and have to stand at the judgment, in "the presence of the living God, denuded of all but conscience."

Certainly nothing would so effectually check and change the present position into which bonnets, robes, wreaths, fringe, and ribbon have somehow crept as ministers of vanity, rivalry, and worldly exultation, as a just view and acceptation of God's offered clothing. Let us look at it for a little, while we try to follow out the simile of our last chapter. Palace life implies palace clothing. No one can be pre-

sented, or attend at Court presentations, without a "Court dress." And the same custom stands good for the palace, present and eternal, of the great King: the palace door cannot turn on its hinges to the unclothed, or ill-clothed, or self-clothed soul. In Scripture, however, we find two sorts of distinctive palace clothing offered for our acceptance. Without one of them "ye cannot enter in." We find it under different descriptions, of which I take three. Isaiah says (lxi. 10), "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Christ Himself spoke of it as the "best robe" in one parable, and in another as "the wedding garment." And oh, how solemn and suggestive and checking a recollection should this be to those who are apparently putting the strength of a life into preparations for earthly feast or wedding! "And when the King came in to see the guests, He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and He saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness." (Matt. xxii. 11—13.) In the language of divines,

founded on Scripture, this robe, or wedding garment, is explained to be our justification through the blood and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 8—18.) It covers the naked soul; it gives entrance within the palace to them that are without; and it so effectually hides the sinner and his sin, that looking on it, the holy God of judgment can say, now as of old, that "He hath beheld no iniquity in Jacob, nor hath seen perverseness in Israel." When coverings of false righteousness, and defences of wood, hay, and stubble have to be burnt up, a soul, however tardily, and suffering however much "loss," flying to get refuge in this robe, WILL enter in and "BE SAVED." (1 Cor. iii. 18.) One of our best hymn-writers has commemorated this covering in the following lines, which I quote with the quaint and characteristic story. The Queen of Frederick II. of Prussia was one day walking in her palace gardens, when she heard a girl's sweet voice from a shrubbery, singing hymns; one she sang was—

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

The Queen spoke to her, and found that she was a happy child of God, who had come from Berlin on a visit to Schönhausen, where her uncle was gardener of the palace. Some weeks after, when

at Berlin, the royal lady, who could not forget the child, sent for her ; and though the Court was met for dinner when her father brought her, the Queen had her put on a chair from whence she could see the splendour of silver, gold, and china, with the surrounding guests. When asked what she thought of it all, she looked quickly at the beautiful dresses around her, and said nothing. But then folding her hands, she began to sing about the robe which she felt was wrapped around her own soul :—

“ Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress :
’Mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.
No age can change its glorious hue :
The robe of Christ is ever new.” *

All who accept of this robe, know that it is a gift. They know, too—sooner or later—that it is an effectual covering, and that it need not, and cannot be added to. Before accepting and wearing it, they recognised fully and freely of their own previous dress that it was a “covering narrower than that they could wrap themselves in.” (Is. xxviii. 20.) After an attempt, long or short, to enter into the palace clad in this unseemly raiment, all had abandoned

* Quoted from Mrs. Barbour’s “Child of the Kingdom.”

self-effort, and entered in the gifted glorious dress of Christ's imputed righteousness.

But there is another dress, not needful at the entrance, nay, not essential in some of the lower parlours and offices of the palace, but without which none can sit as "friends" and guests in the palace saloons, abiding in the presence of the King; nor without it can His full design be carried out, nor His greatest glory be completed. (Acts iii. 26.) This is the inner garment of personal holiness, or, in other words, of grateful and constant obedience, which must be worn by all who wish to be Christ's "friends" as well as "servants." (John xv. 14, 15.) It is a beautiful dress indeed, all unlike the raiment of earth, for it makes its wearers "all glorious within." Is not such a garment thus composed of gifts of courtly graces, too little prized by our honourable women, who, without it, will yet never be meet for the choice company of the King's daughters? (Psalm xlv. 9—13, 14.) We have several Scriptural lists of the adornments composing that Court dress of wrought gold and needlework, and that polishing after the similitude of a palace, which we have already somewhat considered. Here is one given us by St. Paul: "PUT ON therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, an heart of pity, kindness, lowliness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbear-

ing one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against any : even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. But over all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.....and be ye thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ; and everything whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Here is another by St. Peter : "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us by His own glory and virtue, through which He hath given unto us His exceeding great and precious promises ; that by means of these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust ; and for this reason giving on your part all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-restraint, and to self-restraint patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love ; for these things being in you, and multiplying, render you not idle, nor yet unfruitful, towards the perfect knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Col.iii.12—17; 2 Pet.i.3—8. Dean Alford's translation, which compare with received text.)

In reading these passages afresh, does it not seem a strange, contrasting light in which to read our own long-professing, but unadorned lives? and does not this question sound in our ears, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy behaviour?" I was reading the other day of a chief woman of other days, who believed (as few of us do) that such Scriptural portraits are genuinely expected to be faithful representations of OUR lives. "She (Mrs. Cayley) was well-known in London," said Mr. Wesley, "alike as a woman of devoted spirit, and the most elegant and polished manners;"—with reference to another list by St. Paul (Phil. iv. 8): "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are seemly, whatsoever things are right, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," etc., he went on to say, that "no one ever dwelt more, or with MORE SUCCESS, upon this Divine assemblage of graces;" and speaking of her loving and unwearied efforts to win souls for God, he quoted that line of Prior,—

"Manna was on her tongue,
And witchcraft in her eye."

Many in these days have, through God's mercy, been convinced by the Holy Spirit of their need of

a WHOLE Saviour ; *i.e.*, from sin, as well as from the punishment of sin. (Matt. i. 21.) But comparatively few seem to feel much expectation of getting this practical gift, or anticipate much "success" in the use of it. How is this? Is it not, because, while they have been brought to accept as a direct gift, and to wear without self-effort the outer robe of justification, they have not yet been brought to accept and wear the inner robe of sanctification, exactly in the same way, and from the very same donor? Hence the wearisome efforts to shape and sew and stitch and embroider the daily robe of daily holiness ; and a miserable, patched, bungled affair it is at the very best. Careworn are the faces, and burdened the hearts of those who, freely accepting, as an act of Christ, their justification, yet mysteriously labour on to do something in the life-long work of their sanctification. Some comfort, under such circumstances, is indispensable, and so one takes refuge,—for I know the state well,—in the flattering unction to one's soul, that, somehow or other, the very failures, and the very miseries will count for something in sanctification, and are really a proof that we are more in earnest, and more holy than our more cheerful neighbours. Well for us is it when God arrests us in the midst of such delusions, else barren wishes for holiness may turn out to be like

Balaam's idle and unanswered aspirations. (Compare Num. xxiii. 10, with xxxi. 8.) Well for us, when we learn from Him, that when we accept of Christ as our righteousness, He may also be ours in His double work wrought for us and wrought in us. The whole Bible is full of promises of a real gift, an attainable sanctification, a possible likeness to God, a legitimate expectation of a beautiful clothing within as well as without, which will make us meet here, as well as hereafter, for the very presence-chamber of the King. What, then, is the cause of failure? Simply, when we do not take CHRIST as the first and the last, the Omega as well the Alpha of our spiritual alphabet, the All in all of our spiritual life. How clearly He tells us of it, in words which are so familiar that we have lost the sense of what they really mean! "The just shall live by faith." (Rom. i. 7.) "Sanctified by faith that is in ME." (Acts xxvi. 18.) "But of Him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us *wisdom*, and RIGHTEOUSNESS, and SANCTIFICATION, and *redemption*: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let Him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. i. 30, 31.)

It is not difficult for us to realize that if we were presumptuous enough to try to do one iota in the way of self-righteousness to save from the curse of

the broken law, or mad enough to suppose that we could redeem our bodies from the power of the grave, we should be glorying in ourselves, and disobeying God's injunction of glorying in HIM. But we do not *see* this in our daily attempts to walk after the wisdom of our own reason, or after the only partially aided efforts of our own selves for sanctification. Yet any one of the four is as binding as the others, and we shall never be what God means us to be till we take "Christ" as enough for "all," and to be the "in all" of our lives,—our whole set of "double garments," outer and inner. Some of us have had a strong and early bias against the simplicity of this doctrine, by having been brought up to believe that the Holy Spirit was to be the agent *with ourselves* in the work of sanctification; and it is a serious difficulty with many that they fear, as it were, the dethroning of the Holy Spirit from what they believed to be His allotted triune share of the great work of salvation. But not so: the Holy Spirit is placed before us by the Son Himself in His own blessed place,—that of comforting us in the partial absence of the living Christ, of teaching us "all things," guiding us into "all truth," taking of the things of Christ and "showing" them unto us, and enabling us by faith to receive Christ

as a dweller in, and purifier of our hearts: in short, He "glorifies Christ." (John xvi. 4.) Surely the Holy Spirit must have been very near, and very speedy, in thus teaching and blessing the soul of that poor heathen, who might well put us to shame when he said, that as he understood his new life, it was, "Christ *here*," pointing to his Bible,— "Christ *here*," pointing to his heart,—and "Christ *THERE*," pointing to heaven.

When I first heard the words "Holiness through faith in Christ," I did as many do: I laid a wrong emphasis on the words. I emphasized holiness, and commenced a fresh struggle and effort to get it; or I emphasized Faith, and agonized to believe properly. "Surrender yourself to Jesus moment by moment," said a Christian friend to me; and then began a fresh and more weary struggle after surrender. But the appointed message reached me thus: "It is the Giver you need before the gifts." Then came the right emphasis,—the CHRIST in His right place, doing all we want; and the Holy Spirit teaching us so to accept of Him, and working more and more faith in us. Mrs. Fletcher gives us a good instance of the cure of a very common feminine fault in this way of Scriptural emphasis: "Needless fears were the most predominant passion of my soul by nature. One day I read these words

in the thirty-fourth Psalm : 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.' Faith sprung up in my heart. I said, 'It shall be fulfilled,' and from that hour I have felt such a change in regard to fear, as I can give no one an idea of, unless they should have suffered as I have done from that infirmity. The fight of faith is courageously to believe every moment that the LORD JESUS absolutely undertakes our whole cause." *

Even those who content themselves with the robe of SAFETY, and have little or no expectation of getting near and yet nearer to Him in whom they believe as their justification, look forward to the time of white robes, and victors' palms, and golden crowns, and of stars differing in glory. Those, too, who long and struggle and agonize after holiness, and go mourning all their days because they have it not, look forward with gleams of hope and brightness to eternity, as their only time of truly giving honour to Him whom they love. And it is true that never till then is sanctification worked out in full completion ; but such are apt to forget that this is Christ's time of *making ready* His bride, the Church—each individual believer—to enter into the eternal

* Life of Mrs. Fletcher, of Madeley.

palace. The clothing of wrought gold, the raiment of needlework, is being *now* prepared, and in the beautiful language of the poet,—

“And ere He brings her to her palace home,
Instructs her in all gentle courtesies
And in such queenly graces as beseem
The bride of one whom nations own their Prince;
But chiefly tells her of His Father’s love,
His glory, and His goodness, and His grace,
Until her heart travels before her steps
To see the Sire beloved by her beloved.” *

All acknowledge, moreover, that some have much more of this preparatory beauty, this wedded nearness, than others. The beauty of the Lord is already upon some of His people; WHY not upon many more also? Let but CHRIST shine within a soul, and His glory shall be seen upon it, and it shall become “all glorious within.” (Compare Eph. v. 14; Dean Alford’s translation; and Is. lx. 2; last clause of Ps. xc. 17.) Some French people went to hear Mr. Fletcher, of Madeley, although they did not understand English; and when asked their reason, replied, “We went to look at him, for heaven seemed to beam from his countenance.” It was remarked of Henrietta, Duchess of Wurtemberg, that she was “a true Princess, without

* Rev. E. Bickersteth.

and within;" and a poor peasant explained the latter part of the phrase by her simple words, "That is a lady who lets the love of God be shining out of her very eyes."

All truth requires to be carefully balanced, and provision to be made for the wonderfully various classes of minds which come under its influence. That "Why not?" is answered by two opposite declarations.

I. It is too difficult.

II. It is too easy.

I. "It is too difficult: I cannot attain to it," is perhaps the most common. But the weaker, and the more perverse the "I," the worldlier the surroundings, the stronger the chains, the greater glory to His power who is far above our definitions of ease or difficulty. He is the God of the hills as well as of the vallies. It is the same to Him whether He conquers by two "little flocks of kids," or the "many" hosts of united Israel. (1 Kings xx. 27, 28; 2 Chron. xiv. 11.) We may encumber that power, however, in the vallies of false humility. "God is able." Do you believe it? "Yes: but I am not able." Listen how His Word meets your's: "God *is* able to make all grace abound toward YOU" (2 Cor. ix. 8), not a little grace, or even much grace,

but "*all* grace." Still there comes the doubt "But I can't believe that I could *keep* His grace." Listen still further: "God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye ALWAYS having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." He who is able, is able not only to make you able, but to KEEP you able to do that which He commands. See the power and the peace of 1 Pet. i. 5; 2 Pet. i. 3; Is. xxvi. 3, 4; 2 Tim. i. 12.

II. "It is too easy," as a lady said to the late Mr. Grant of Arndilly, one day. "Just you try," was his pithy answer. This objection is made by some individually—active, energetic souls, who would have been unhappy in the quiet encompassing of Jericho, and miserable under the teaching of the prophet: "Thy strength is to sit still." That "conflict is the normal state of the Christian;" as I have heard it stated, is a favourite confession of such minds. This accusation of "too easy" is more frequently, however, brought forward *for* others, and in honest fear lest the doctrine should be abused. But it is only where it is completely misunderstood, that such fear and such abuse can occur. There is in one sense plenty to do, and abundance of difficulty. This is put in various ways in Scripture. We have to "*stretch*

out" the withered arm, to "*take*" the cup of salvation, to "*lay hold*" on eternal life, to "*follow on*" to know the Lord, to "*taste*" and see that the Lord is good, to "*put on*" the various parts of the garment of sanctification mentioned in Col. iii. 10—14; see also Gal. iii. 27. Nay, the very LIFE of Faith implies working (Gal. v. 6), fighting (1 Tim. vi. 12), purifying (Acts xv. 9.) Else it were "dead." (Jas. ii. 17.) Moreover, we have *to will to* live godly in Christ Jesus. The want of the real will to be holy is the hardest of all; and when once brought to even understand that point, a soul is on its way to holiness. So transcendently difficult is this "easy" doctrine, indeed, that we have to be brought round the circle again to this latter part of an often quoted and much abused passage: "It is God which worketh in you, to WILL and to DO of His good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) David knew this difficulty of WILL and the cure of Divine action as well as St. Paul, for in his experience we find the same thought as in the latter's celebrated prayer for the Hebrew Christians. "Now the God of peace MAKE you to do His will," prayed Paul. "MAKE me to go . . . MAKE me to understand . . . MAKE to pass mine eyes from vanity," prayed David. (Ps. cxix. 27, 35, 37, margin.)

But another sufficient source of difficulty is the

intensely practical nature of thus by faith looking to Jesus Christ to *make* us holy. In that noble book which I recommend to all seekers after practical holiness,—Dr. Candlish's "Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John,"—he says that there must not be anything short of "a fixed settled purpose that you are not to sin; not merely that you are to sin as little as you can, but that you are not to sin at all."* How such a will and purpose raises the standard! How hateful, how inexcusable it makes even the very slightest sin! How near a soul must nestle to Him who is to fight! How close to the Blood which is the "provision" for cleansing the very least stain! What a constant keeping within the "armour of God,"—which was that of Christ also. (Compare Is. lix. 17, xi. 5, with Ephes. vi. 13, 14, 17.) What pains to LET the Word of Christ dwell in us richly," instead of the world, the flesh, and the devil!

Dear friends, never, oh, never say that this way of Christ is "too easy" or "too difficult," for in both there lurks that self-deception which impugns God's power, and lowers God's standard: "As He

* See especially these chapters, the very headings of which are suggestive: "The Sinless Aim; provision for Shortcoming;" "Abiding in the Sinless One, so as not to Sin;" "The Walk of One Abiding in God;" "The Secret of not Sinning; of Impeccability."

which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." (See 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; Matt. v. 48.)

"Seigneur Jésus ! sois à jamais ma gloire,
Sois mon amour, ma joie, et ma douceur ;
Sois mon rempart, ma force, ma victoire,
Ma paix, mon bien, ma vie, et mon bonheur ;
Sois à jamais toute mon espérance ;
Sois mon secours, mon guide, mon Sauveur ;
Sois mon trésor, ma fin, ma récompense,
Mon seul partage et le tout de mon cœur."

VI.

Cutting and Carving.



“Soon in the golden city
The boys and girls shall play,
And through the dazzling mansions
Rejoice in endless day :
O Christ, prepare Thy children
With that triumphant throng
To pass the burnished portals,
And sing th’ eternal song.”

Cutting and Carving.

"I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding . . . and in cutting of stones, and in carving of timber."—Ex. xxxi. 3—5.

"Our sons as plants grown up in their youth . . . our daughters as corner-stones, cut (marg.) after the similitude of a palace."—Ps. cxliv. 12.

THE variety and richness of Scripture metaphor is very striking, and it is especially interesting to note the double or treble imagery that often occurs. For instance, with regard to the metaphor of the palace, of which I have been making use, in how many different forms of thought do we have it presented to us! By the abiding in Christ we have Him as our habitation or palace; again, as united to Christ we have the entering into the palace with the kingly Bridegroom; again, we ourselves are stated to be the habitation of the great King through His Spirit (Eph. ii. 22), while in the Psalm again quoted—the richness of which we have not yet exhausted—we find the noble possibility of our sons

and daughters being built into the "similitude of a palace." In the grown-up plants we find the trees whence comes the timber to be carved and fashioned for the King, while the daughters are to occupy the prominent position, at once useful and ornamental, of corner-stones.

Let us take a short retrospect of this 144th Psalm. First we have the exercise of the appropriating faith which enabled David to lay hold of God as *his* God, and to grasp the truth of the later Scriptures, that this Divine gift and possession was his abiding-place from whence he need go no more out, —his "goodness" or sanctification, as well as his personal Saviour. (Compare ver. 2 with 1 Cor. i. 30.) Then we have the Psalmist coming to particulars about "*the*" war and *his* enemies, narrated as so dangerous and deadly, so incapable of being conquered save by the Lord Himself, that we are somewhat taken by surprise to find that they are ONLY vain, false, and worldly company. Let us now notice the great consequences that are to happen from this victory given by the Lord. He is to rid us of the strange children and their bad ways, "that" (ver. 11, 12) our sons may be as full-grown plants, "that" our daughters may be as corner-stones. The corollary is plain: if the bad company, the worldliness, the vain speech, and the false actions

be not got rid of, then we have no reason whatever to expect that our sons will be anything but dwarfed plants and useless timber, or that our daughters will be sufficiently polished for the King's palace.

One thing let us carefully note: although by God's grace we may have got into the palace ourselves, safe and even rich with the clothing, ornaments, and graces of royal life, we cannot take our children in with us; no, nor polish them into its true similitude, nor carve them into the beams, rafters, lintels, and sideposts of houses fit for God's dwelling-place. The work must all be of the Lord's free grace. He must come down; He must scatter the strange children and free the hearts and the lives of our beloved ones from the strong enemies, "that" they may be fitted for Him. And oh, how ready He is to do it for us! For, saith the Lord, "I WILL lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I WILL MAKE thy windows of agates, and thy gates and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught OF THE LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Is. liv. 11—13.) "Oh, then we have nothing to do if God is to do it all," is sometimes said by those who do not see the peculiar beauty of God's plan of work,—all His own, yet done by instruments intelligent and human,

who, as He has wisely arranged, can mar and delay the work, though they can neither of themselves do nor destroy it. Eli and David were blunted instruments in this, though not in other work, and thus were judged and punished. (1 Sam. iii. 13; 1 King i. 5, 6.) The Israelites did not "sharpen" God's words unto their children (see Deut. vi. 6, 7, marg.); and thus blurred and blunted, they had no power to check or destroy the lying practices of succeeding generations. We have each therefore to see what the Lord is entrusting to us to do for and with Him in the great work of family and home architecture. Here are a few things which we have to do.

(1) Let us pray. That was a true and beautiful saying of a German Princess, that "the education of children must be carried on kneeling before God." The Spirit of the Lord inspired and instructed the ancient architects and builders how they might best shape and polish their dead materials, and God "filled" them with His own almighty and all-working presence. How "much more" (Luke xi. 13) may we ask and receive His teaching and fulness, so that the cutting and carving of the human material entrusted to us should go on according to His will, and not according to our's.

Let us obtain, then, this mighty active presence of God's Spirit in our families and home circles.

(2) Let us ourselves receive and show a good palace training and beautiful clothing, thus keeping clear of the "strange children" in our own ways. How can we expect our sons and daughters to be "polished" from vanity and falsehood when we set the example in our daily lives of conventional falsities, of vain opinions and judgments, of costly and fashionable array, and all the other *et ceteras* gathered up in "worldliness," which I recently heard so shortly and clearly defined by Dean Goulburn, when preaching on the subject, as "that which is antagonistic to God." It is true that the Lord works miraculously sometimes, and that souls are rescued out of the most worldly education; but His general rule for family as well as other work is that "as we sow so shall we also reap," be it sooner or be it later, and we have no right to expect it otherwise.

(3) Let us learn how to wait. It is a difficult, but it is a most important lesson to "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." How unbelieving our prayers, how impatient for results, how discouraged when things seem to go against us! Surely one cause of the accusation often brought against

Christian parents of their children turning out ill, or in other words unconverted, is that they forget to wait the Lord's time. It is important, too, to learn how to wait, for we may do it in a compulsory, unbelieving manner. There is a "waiting in waiting," as David expresses it (Ps. xl. i, marg.),—waiting with real, calm, patient EXPECTATION. This would stop the anguish in our prayers for souls, of which we are almost ready to boast ourselves, though but a form of unbelief. The gladness of expecting hope is a good exchange for it. This is well brought out in the following passage: "Not one seemed to understand the true character of the real prayer of faith. They took it for granted that faith agonizes instead of resting, struggles instead of lying still in the hands of Jesus,—that it exercises our strength in holding Jesus, instead of accepting the fact that He holds us by His power, and just letting Him do it. Applying this false conception of the prayer of faith to the case of their loved ones, instead of bringing them to Jesus and putting them into His hands, and resting the case, and ceasing all anxiety, turning them over as they were, without one plea, in trust to Jesus, as they had done with themselves, they thought they must hold on in agonizing struggle, trying to believe they would be saved, until in fact they should be. Thus they failed to

intrust them to Jesus, and so failed both of peace in their own souls, and of the work of Jesus in the souls of their loved ones."* There is a waiting-place, moreover, clearly indicated, and if we neglect it no sure promise of answer at all is given. "If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 7.) But many of us querulously complain of unanswered prayer for our children, when we ourselves have been wandering from the abiding-place out upon the mountains of vanity.

(4) We can *let* our children be cut and polished. Not very easy work this. When a child is unhappy or disappointed, or in pain, or in illness nigh unto death, the hearts of his parents suffer with him, and would far rather suffer instead of him. But all these things are the cutting and polishing instruments in the hand of the Divine Workman, and perhaps form the very answer of prayers we think unanswered. The more precious the "pleasant stones," indeed, the more they tell of suffering. The agate, it is said, is produced by the action of fire; the very word "sapphire" signifies the work

* See chapter on the conversion of children, called "Our Heart-burdens," in the Rev. W. Boardman's little work, "Gladness in Jesus."

of graving ; and the finer the water of the diamond, the more pains are bestowed on cutting and polishing ; touchingly expressed in these lines :—

“ My own bright jewel, dearest,
The graver’s tool is keen,
And sharpest seems when nearest
The emerald’s perfect sheen ;
But in the prince’s casket
All mark its peerless glow,
And none will ever ask it—
Why didst thou suffer so ! ” *

But apart from these special times and seasons, parents themselves must be polishing instruments ; and when they shrink from being the means in this gracious work—as God daily appoints—they miss the honour of being the Lord’s deputies, and it is small wonder that prayer continues unanswered. It is not always pleasant to give the right names of things, but it is well done in these words : “ Excessive indulgence to others, especially to children, is in fact only self-indulgence under an alias.” † Love of self is never a good polishing instrument, and often compels more severe processes. In the north of Scotland the quaint name of “ heathens ” is given in mason parlance to stones that cannot be

* “ The Master’s Homecall,” by the Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

† “ Guesses at Truth.”

cut and "dressed." But in the spiritual quarry valuable stones are often to be found that pass for and look like "heathen stones," because no home chisel and hammer has passed upon them. What then can the gracious Master Builder do but take the cutting and the carving into His own hands in long after-life?

(5) Let us get the highest motive into our hearts. There is no need of our being Stoics,—no need of being ashamed that in the right nurture and education of our children we do want them to be the happier for it in this world, and to be happy for ever in that which is to come. BUT do not let this be our only or even our chief motive. Our sons should be plants, grown up in their youth not for our credit and glory (how often this hope creeps into our training!), but that they might be "called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." (Is. lxi. 3.) Our daughters should be as polished corner-stones "firmly framed together," that they may "grow unto" that holy temple in the Lord of which "Jesus Christ is the chief Corner-stone." (Eph. ii. 20—22.)

(6) We must let them be happy. There is deep wisdom in this casual remark which I quote from

a book of the day : * " It may be as religious an act, and implies perhaps more self-denial, to romp with our children at one time as to pray with them at another." The very fact that we anxiously long to be rid of the strange children, and strive consistently to avoid their falsities and vanities, is a reason why in all things lawful we should be the first to set an example of cheerfulness, with home and social "flexibility," as it has been well called. And we have in Scripture a warrant for this ; there are several passages in which the merry heart and the cheerful spirit are approvingly alluded to. Dull, melancholy parents, surely as much as the rebuking disciples, practically "forbid" their children from coming to Jesus. While in the Prophet Zechariah we have a touching proof that the great God of heaven and earth looks down on the innocent games of children, and even makes provision for their cheerfulness in the wonderful ages to come : when "Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth . . . it shall be full of girls and boys playing in the streets thereof !" (Zech. viii. 3, 5.)

(7) Let us look away from our weaknesses and difficulties. Solomon says, "He that observeth the

* "Stepping Heavenwards."

wind shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." Even when the soil seems at the hardest, let us scatter the grain ; when line and precept seem forgotten, let us add line upon line and precept upon precept. Parents that pray, hope, smile, love, work, and build, will have a goodly heritage in heaven, and will doubtless be surprised thus to meet with great results from prayers and efforts which they thought long lost. "When God gives the blessing, how grieved we shall be that we had not more entirely looked to Him, and expected the exercise of His power in our weakness."* When Monica stood side by side with her converted son, in fullest, unspeakable joy, five days before her translation to heaven (a scene commemorated by Ary Scheffer's well-known picture), it must have been a bitter-sweet feeling that the prayer she thought unanswered, that her son might not go to Rome, was all the time *being answered* by his conversion amongst the very temptations she had so despairingly sought to keep him from entering.

These lines well express the after-effects of a mother's love and teaching combined :—

* "Mothers of Great Men," by Mrs. Ellis.

"My mother's voice! How oft doth creep
Its cadence on my lonely hours,
Like healing sent on wings of sleep,
Or dew to the unconscious flowers.
I might forget her melting prayer
While leaping pulses madly fly;
But in the still unbroken air
Her gentle tone comes stealing by,
And years of sin and manhood flee,
And leave me at my mother's knee.
The book of nature, and the print
Of beauty on the whispering sea,
Give aye to me some lineament
Of what I have been taught to be;
For nature's book is even yet
With all my mother's lessons writ."

N. P. WILLIS.

If the Duke of Wellington could point to Eton, and say of its unconscious days and lessons, "THERE was fought the Battle of Waterloo," depend on it that many a child of believing parents will hereafter point in memory to his mother's knee, or his father's circling arms, and say, "THERE was won that battle," or "There was begun this work for God's cause." When parents are receiving the teaching "words" of Jesus, and letting them "abide" in their hearts, they may steadfastly hope for the fulfilled promise, that that which "ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the housetops." (Luke xii. 3.) No teaching that

comes from communion with Jesus Himself *can* be lost; a thought that was surely realized by that mother who gave utterance to this touching expression of past confidence, when the Lord at last fulfilled her joy: "Henry, I always felt that I had hold of thee, however distant, for I was conscious that I had hold of God, and that God had hold of thee."

We have some historical examples of the failure of even conscientious training, when apart from that Christianity which has in it the Personal Blessing for all families in the earth. (Gen. xxii. 18.) The unfortunate, though noble-minded mother of Nero, was honoured by being his military watchword, as the "best of all mothers," yet what maternal anguish was her lot! When the infamous Messalina was about to expiate her crimes with her blood, her sorrowing mother, Lepida, came to her, saying, "I could not teach my daughter how to live, I have come to teach her how to die;" and her instructions were but crowned with the success of a sullen, despairing silence. But professedly Christian mothers and "chief women" have not the excuse of the Roman matrons, who knew neither the Blessing of Families nor had received the promise of the teaching Spirit, "Unto you and to your children." (Compare Acts ii. 39; Is. xlv. 3.)

We have a beautiful contrasted example of the

acknowledged effects of a mother's training in a country and at a period so dark that we may also feel rebuked by it. During the times when the Gospel was quietly pervading souls and homes in Spain, a Spanish lady (Doña Leanor de Vibero) lived, died, and was buried, without a suspicion of heterodoxy. Some time afterwards the storm of persecution which had been long gathering burst over the heads of Christ's hidden ones, turning them into open believers and confessors. Some suspicious circumstances in connection with Doña Leanor's religious life having been surmised and whispered, her dead body was exhumed, her effigy was dressed in *san benito* and pointed cap of shame, and both were burned together at an *auto da fé* held in the city of Valladolid in 1358. It is interesting to note in what consisted the head and front of her supposed offence. It was the fact that her five children became martyrs, in their different ways and degrees, for the Lord Jesus Christ! The presumption was, it was said, that these sons and daughters must have been taught, trained, and built up by their mother in their heresies, or they could not thus have suffered. Her dead body paid the penalty, while her happy spirit doubtless rejoiced in being the honoured mother of martyr souls.

In the biography of the late Duchess of Orleans

we find a two-fold instance of careful parental attention to the cutting and carving after the similitude of a palace. In her childhood, as Princess Helen of Mecklenburgh-Schwerin, she was so well trained in Scripture as early to begin the conquest of self-love. One day, when sacrificing some childish fancy to please others, she gave as her reason that "our Lord said, Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." This continued to be her marked characteristic through life: thus her mother had sown and thus did she also reap; for it was said of the daughter that the "talisman of her life was unselfishness." When she married the Duke of Orleans, they mourned in Germany the loss of "our good Helen;" but in her adopted country they rejoiced over her "as the most precious conquest France had ever made." As mother of the Count de Paris and Duc de Chartres, her own ease and personal inclinations were entirely set aside, and all her energies given to training them for the beloved country which she believed it was God's will they should govern. Whether in the happiness of domestic life or in the agonies of unexpected bereavement, or standing bravely with her young sons at her side in the midst of a turbulent throng, but ever respected by all parties, or in the privacy of disappointed hopes, or on a

death-bed from whence she went to her Saviour King, we can trace the individual history of a soul brought early into the spiritual palace, and desiring that in turn her children might be the servants of the King of kings.

Would that among our "chief women" more mothers might arise who would seek the right way, like David, to get rid of the vanities and falsehoods which encumber their lives, "that" the sons and daughters of upper life might be timber-trees of righteousness and corner-stones of "fair colours!" Would that those who profess nothing but to be of the earth earthy, might be able to say of our professedly Christian women what was said by a heathen of a young widowed mother! Anthusa, the mother of John Chrysostom, though left a widow at twenty, never would marry again, and devoted her life to the education of her children. On hearing this from her son, the heathen teacher of eloquence, Libanius, exclaimed, as he turned towards his audience, "Oh, gods of Greece, what women there are amongst those Christians!"

VII.

Gifts and Gibers.



. . . . "Wisdom sits alone,
Topmost in heaven : she is its gift,—its God !
And in the heart of man she sits as high,
Though grovelling eyes forget her oftentimes,
Seeing but this world's idols. The pure mind
Sees her for ever ; and in youth we come
Fill'd with her sainted ravishment, and kneel,
Worshipping God thro' her sweet altar-fires,
And then is knowledge good."

N. P. WILLIS.

Gifts and Givers.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.”—
JAMES i. 17.

“Freely ye have received, freely give.”—MATT. x. 8.

IT was but the other day that an old, old worn gift startled me, so suddenly did the sight of it seem to bring up the old dead giver, instinct with life and intelligence. Strange it surely is, that the varied gifts of God, which are never old and worn, but ever fresh and lifesome, should fail so often to bring to our heart the Giver that was dead, but is alive for evermore! We have been considering *the* Gift of gifts, the unspeakable Gift, the Gift which is alike Gift and Giver, the Gift which is alike Palace and King, and also the spiritual gifts, graces, ornaments and robes which He gives. But there are other gifts which may be designated as those which we cannot help having,—which get very much misused even by Christian people, especially by some who are apt to do much mischief, by “looking at

things from a distance," as Sir Thomas More said. It is a near view of those gifts which, though not specialities of the Christian, are equally God-given, which I wish to take just now. "Every gift" of civilization, of intellect, of inventive genius, of conquering power, comes from above, and never from beneath. We have no reason to think that the prince of this world gives anything except promises, though he does a great deal with God's gifts. It is a touching thought how many highly-gifted men and women there have been, and are, who yet recognise not the hand of the Giver; but whose language is, "My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself." (Ezek. xxix. 3.) We find many examples in early Scriptural times. Cain himself, the first murderer, was also the first man of recorded constructive genius and fore-sight,—gifts which, though exercised, alas, without the presence of the Lord (Gen. iv. 16, 17), came to him by descent from his once perfectly God-gifted sire. See how these hereditary gifts shone out in his family, one and all of whom were well fitted to adorn our most gifted circles with accomplishments, sciences, and social charms. One, the father of agriculture; another, the inventor of the theory and the practice of music, and the constructor of musical instruments; a third, the founder of

mechanical science, and the artificer of those wonderful materials, brass and iron ; whilst the name of the mother Adah, signified "adornment;" and the sister was Naamah, the "graceful." Yet the world deteriorated in spite of these rich practical and æsthetic gifts. It was said, after years of experience, with the exception of one household, that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the heart was only evil continually;" and "it grieved God at His heart,"—the tender, generous heart of the Giver of "*every* good gift." Look at that wonderful man of brilliant genius and natural wisdom, the unhappy Prince of Tyros (Ezek. xxviii.),—at his exquisite gifts, created and prepared for him, and he "set" by God on his pinnacle of fame and glory. Yet his heart was lifted up, his wisdom tarnished, his brightness corrupted ; and so the sentence of the Giver was, "*I* will cast thee to the ground." When Nebuchadnezzar walked upon his palace roof, and rejoiced in its splendid architecture, and in his power, honour, and brightness, he forgot that these were *gifts* (Dan. iv. 30 ; v. 18—20), and so "he was deposed from his kingly throne." That gift of eloquence, which made the people cry out, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man," was from God (Acts xii. 21—23) ; and because Herod

acknowledged it not, his punishment came in marked humiliating contrast to his self-glory. Time would fail to tell of the numerous instances in history, past and present, in which God is clearly seen to render useless those gifts given by Him, but kept for Self.

The evil root of all the misused gifts which we see in such gigantic forms, is as real now as in the days before the flood, or the woes of Tyrus, or the deposition and shame of stately despots,—gifts worked in for Self, instead of being worked out for ANOTHER first, and then for many others. There are no littles with God, and our small natural gifts, whatever they may be, are on the same platform in His sight who judges not as man judges, as the sealed sum of wisdom and beauty of “the anointed cherub of Tyrus.” If we fold them unused in a napkin, there will equally be a void in the work and the heart of the Master; if we misuse them there will equally be a weight amiss in the merchandise of His world.

I feel that this is no unimportant subject to bring before chief women, and in their ordinary appellation there is contained the double thought of gift and giver. “Lady,” in old Saxon, I have read, signified “bread-giver.” It is important to ask ourselves in what forms bread has been given

to us to give, and to make sure that when asked for bread we do not give a stone. Ignorance of God's gifts is a sad and a dangerous position, "For she did not know that I gave her corn...therefore will I return and take away her corn in the time thereof." (Hos. ii. 8, 9.)

Before all other giving we must each give our own selves to the Lord ; but then is seen,—as I heard it lately explained in a London pulpit,—the full beauty and significance of the similarity in gifts and giving between the good Shepherd and His people. He gave, *i.e.*, He "laid down" His life for the flock, not only in death, but in His years of earthly ministry: and so ought our lives with their "every gift" to be given,—*i.e.*, "laid down," as gifts to others. (Compare John x. 11: 1 John iii. 16.)

The giving of ourselves implies the whole gift,—nothing kept back as we have seen in an earlier chapter; else we shall be like Ananias and Sapphira, and probably in this very falsity do we find the explanation of much of the contrary walking, the bread-giving in the service of God one day and of mammon the next, and the consequently unsatisfactory lives of our chief women. No part of the lands or possessions must be kept back from God's purposes; no tithe of the corn lavished on

self, or we shall never be true bread-givers. What bread then has God given to "elect" ladies to give again? There is a great deal of talk at present about the equality of men and women, and of the consequent rights and wrongs of the latter, so that one's danger is not the diminishing, but the magnifying of the gifts of women. Although very far from an advocate of the present agitation, yet with all dispassionate review of the subject, it is impossible to read the annals of our sex without being struck by the high attainments which those *who have been educated for it* DO attain in branches thought to belong to man's exclusive sphere. History tells of galaxy after galaxy of gifted women in different periods and different countries. In ancient Rome, such noble matrons as Cornelia and Aurelia, and many others, were not only able to preside over the education of their sons, but became governesses to such patrician children as were destined to hold high offices in the State. In Etruria there was one sort of family descent which received peculiar veneration,—those families who could boast a succession of eminent mothers received the highest honours. In more modern Italy women of high degree were teachers of theology, law, and statesmanship,—others excelled in every branch of art and literature. Of

Olympia Morata, all lovely and feminine as she was, a competent masculine authority writes, "In the Court of Ferrara I myself have heard her declaiming in Latin, speaking in Greek, explaining the paradoxes of Cicero and answering questions.She had written besides, dialogues in Greek and Latin in imitation of Plato and Cicero, so perfectly elaborated, that not even Zoilus himself could have found in them anything to censure." Descartes, the celebrated philosopher, said of the Princess of Bohemia, "she easily and at once understood all that which gives our learned doctors such trouble to comprehend." Her friend Anna de Schürmann, we are told, "knew all languages,—Greek, Hebrew, and Oriental, and there was no art in which she did not excel." (Unless it were that of self-control, for, unfortunately, she had a passion for eating spiders, and died of it!) In England, in the sixteenth century, five daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke became the most learned ladies of their day, particularly in Latin and Greek; but "indeed," writes Fuller, "they were all most eminent scholars (the honour of their own and the shame of our sex), both in prose and poetry." About the same period we read of a sisterhood, —Lady Anne, Lady Margaret, and Lady Jane Howard, daughters of the Duke of Somerset, who

so highly cultivated their natural gifts that they were called "the light and glory of England."

In our own days if few names of women distinguished for severe attainments occur to our minds, beyond Mary Somerville and Margaret Fuller Ossoli, we have a very good hint of the "reason why" in the medical records of those institutions where women have recently received education on a par with men, the results of which have been at all events highly honourable, even although the early masculine training was wanting. This is a good reason therefore for the movement concerning the higher education of women. If God's gifts,—as indeed He ever so wills,—can be brought to higher perfection by careful culture, so be it. The only question to be solemnly asked and carefully pondered, is, WHEREFORE? In many cases the answer is prompt, "To gain bread:" a right and legitimate motive, if it be conjoined with that higher one,—to GIVE bread also. But it is now the fashion for many to spend their time in higher education without the least design or necessity for becoming governesses. So I ask again, "Wherefore?" Is it merely to pass the time? Or to please and elevate Self, like the Prince of Tyros, Herod, and Nebuchadnezzar? Or as a mere additional form of excitement for those who are tired of balls and

operas? Ah, then depend on it, it is no higher education: it needs the higher aim to make it truly high.

Education means that which will teach us how to go through life, so as to be blessings to ourselves, our families, our neighbours, our country,—as well as how to enter and how to spend the long life that is beyond. That woman is the highly educated one who looks on her gifts as bread given by God that she may do His will with it. I have many times heard it languidly asserted that “one can do no good with one’s natural gifts.” No good with God’s gifts! No use to be made of His instruments! That was a fine saying of a highly gifted astronomer, who on his conversion to God, was asked what he would do now with his astronomy: “I am going to heaven,” was the answer, “and I will take the stars on my way;” and he might have added that much beautiful wayside service would his gift have to do on the glorious journey. Try the experiment: one of no failures if not tried *alone*. We need the grace of God to use even those gifts which we are scarcely conscious of as coming from Him, so interwoven are they with our very selves. Yet with that grace they ought to be “ten times better” (Dan. i. 20) than when exercised for the world by the world,—the very “aristocracy,” or “best” of gifts and giving.

We need God as a Teacher. "Who teacheth like Him," said His servant Job (xxxvi. 22): "I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit," said Jehovah (Is. xlviii. 17): while the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Word of God, says "Come.....learn of Me!" What sort of education shall we thus get? A wider range than perhaps we think. Yes: wider than all the teachings of the schools. "Oh, but it is ONLY the Bible; I want a great deal more than that!" says some one of the many, full of intellectual longings. "Only the Bible!" you might as well say, "Only the Lord Jesus Christ!" which, alas, many do say, like "the fool in his heart." The Lord Jesus, even when unrecognized, is in Himself the Fountain of all genius and intellect and civilization, giving gifts even to the rebellious. Nay: wisdom is not only a gift, Wisdom is a name whereby He has revealed Himself to us (Prov. viii.), and in Him are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 3.) And a characteristic of the new man, *ought* to be that he, according to his gift and measure "should be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him." (Col. iii. 10. See also 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.) Who but the Lord Jesus created, and therefore knows intimately, the wonderful mechanism of this and our neighbour worlds, of us

and our neighbour beings? Compare Prov. viii. with Heb. i. for a description of the workings of a greater intellect than our feeble minds can understand. I once stood beside the bed of a dying Christian philosopher; and as he was departing into his glorious blood-bought rest, he said, with a beaming joy never to be forgotten, "I shall see JESUS, who created all things: JESUS who made the worlds. I shall see JESUS as He is!" He who had studied the secrets of the creation literally for eighty years, understood, better than either you or I the mighty Intellect which speaks to us in the Books of Creation, Providence, and Redemption. "Bring me a worm," said Wesley, "that can comprehend a man, and I will show you a man that can comprehend God." No need then to turn away from the Son of God, because we have talents we want to use, and ignorance we want to have instructed. No need to think that religion is only for weak minds and feeble intellects. Ah, no! let us keep close to Jesus; let us ask Him to teach us what real education is. Let the object of the Bible, of the universe, of angels and saints, fire, hail, snow, and vapours, and stormy winds,—the fulfilling His will and His glory,—be our object also, though at first, perhaps, in a faint and fitful fashion: and we all shall have entered into the royal road of learning.

It has been well said, "Oh, the blessings of true religion! It takes the natural faculties of man, and changes them from ordinary cups into sacramental vessels." How different from sentiments which are not uncommon in our days, which associate weakness with religion, and talent with infidelity, forgetting that it is "the *fool* who hath said that there is no God,"—it is "the *foolish* people who have blasphemed Thy name." (Ps. liii. 1, and lxxiv. 18.) What high-treason against the Kingly Giver to say that His subjects are too gifted to be happy under His reign!

Whether it be under the seductive commencement of "Broad" school spiritual teaching, or the influences of higher education standing on its own ground, I know not; but this I do know,—that even among the young ladies of our Christian England there is an under-current of infidelity; which may soon burst its limits and poison with its waters the homes of the future. Oh, then, "chief women" of thought and intelligence, HERE are bread-needers: can you not be bread-givers? If you give back your powers to Him who will sanctify and restore them, what a field for their occupation is the Word of God! THERE you will soon have "bread enough and to spare," not only for your own, but for many other households. How many

of the young mental waifs of our drawing rooms and our boarding schools, for instance, you might feed, teach, clothe, and bring back to the household of faith! Good education generally brings with it the gift of well and easily chosen words, wherewith you may "feed many:" like Mrs. Cayley, it ought to be said, "Manna is on her tongue." The word conversation, indeed, as I have read, comes from the same term as signifies the going together of oxen in threshing out the corn, and thus ought to be exercised in providing the "finest of the wheat." If any speak, the injunction is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter iv. 11); and by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned. (Matt. xii. 37.) As a general rule, too, "chief women" educated as becomes their station, have other natural gifts with which they may do good service in thus supplying the bread of the Scriptures,—gifts of manner, of "polishing," of graceful ease and assured position, which render them peculiarly acceptable to the young. Become students then of the Bible, in order that, like the aged women addressed by Paul, you may be "teachers of good things." Bend every power of your mind, every gift of your leisure, to this great purpose; not in your own strength, but in His,—the Bread of Life,

—who promises “seed to the sower and bread to the eater.”

It is interesting to note how many of the eminent women of old times thought the Word of God the best outlet and channel for their natural gifts. Anne of Bohemia, the Queen of Richard II. of England, studied the Bible in three languages. “To the reading of the Gospels, and Commentaries written upon them by learned men, she devoted a portion of every day, exploring them like one who had discovered a mine of gold, and deriving from them that wisdom whose price is above rubies.” Thence, too, she learned the munificent “bread-giving” which peculiarly entitled her to the meet appellation of LADY. “She imbibed the spirit of Jesus, whose life and character she studied,—a spirit of benevolence and charity. She would remember how Jesus, whose inspired life she took so much pleasure in reading, had compassion on the multitude, numbering four thousand persons, because they had nothing to eat, and wrought a miracle, that they might eat and be filled.”

How beautiful the language concerning this precious Book used by Lady Jane Grey on the night before her execution, in a letter to her sister, sent with her own Greek New Testament! “I have here sent you, my dear sister Katherine, a book

which, although it be not outwardly trimmed with gold, or the curious embroidery of the artfulest needle, yet inwardly is more worth than all the precious rubies which the vast world can boast of. . . . And if you apply diligently to this Book, seeking to direct your life according to the rule of the same, you shall be an inheritor of such riches as neither the covetous shall withdraw from you, neither the thief shall steal, neither yet the moths corrupt. Desire, with David, my best sister, to understand the law of the Lord your God!"*

One of the most gifted of the many women called to occupy a leading position in the world was Pulcheria, the maiden Empress of the East. The influence of her extensive learning, her remarkable State wisdom, and her practically Christian life in high places, is well explained when we know that in private "she studied the Bible through long nights, with mature reflection and constant prayer in difficulties;" and the consequent crown of the whole life, private and public, was humility: no fear of pride when the Word of God reigns paramount.

As every good gift comes from above, and as in God's universe He wastes not His varied agencies,

* Anderson's "Ladies of the Reformation."

but has a use for the very smallest, so there is no part of the education of "chief women" which may not have its work to perform in doing God's will. The "chief women" of our land have in their youth, as a general rule, spent their three, four, or six hours a day at the piano. Can this gift be turned to no good account? I was visiting the other day in a Christian home, where mother, four daughters, and only son, sang every evening to the piano the praises of God, in sweetest harmony of part music. It was like a foretaste of heaven, and gave its own sweet bread to the listeners' hearts. A little trouble, a little perseverance, and the costly gift might easily be revived. Such have also been thoroughly fed with the bread of foreign languages, —an invaluable, and more directly in old times a gift restored from heaven (Acts ii. 4—6), than any other. Ah, can you, who possess this gift of tongues, not seek out the poor foreigners in our streets and slums, and make the bread of kindness doubly sweet to them? or can you not help our Missionaries in ships and docks, who so often are forced to be dumb when they most wish to speak to poor sailor hearts? If like the women of old you have a gift for mathematics and the dead languages, is such knowledge to mould in your possession? is such bread to become a stone? Seek some

one out to feed with it, or you had better not have wasted your time in laying it up. If your own young brothers or sons need you not, are there no children of some decayed neighbour, or underpaid curate, to whom you can lend a helping hand, like the Roman matrons? Or is writing easier to some than speaking or teaching? Can you not share some of your bread with others in the poem, the serial, the volume? If not about grace, still seasoned with grace; if not about God, still done to God, in the spirit of Herbert's beautiful lines:—

“For every sentence, clause, and word
That's not *inlaid* with Thee, my Lord,
Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book that is not thine.”

It is well to look at all sides of the Word of God, and there we find some very important negative commands: “Thus saith the Lord, *Learn not* the way of the heathen.” (Jer. x. 2.) “*Enquire not* after their gods.” (Deut. xii. 30.) Now it is a very painful fact that education possesses the key of a treasure-house which fits also into the key-hole of a chest full of deadly poisons. No unimportant work then for “chief women” in these days to make a stand against the inroad of false, foolish, immoral, sceptical literature, which is unin-

dating the homes, libraries, and schoolrooms of Great Britain. A very wise rebuke is said to have issued from an ancient Spanish Cortes, against the conduct of "ladies who spend their idle time in reading romances full of lies and vanities, which they receive as truths for the government of their own conduct in their intercourse with the world." Varied in their forms of evil, they remind one of the forbidden idols of Canaan (Deut. iv. 16—18): some undisguisedly in earthy and creeping likeness; others like the winged birds that apparently fly towards heaven; others in their mystic obscurity, like the fish of the waters beneath the earth; but all equally ungodly, all equally partaking of the lies and vanities, from which David sought the hand of the Lord to save him. It is not only that trash and garbage such as this cannot educate our women to

"Act : act in the living present,
Heart within and God o'erhead,"

but that it counteracts—nay poisons—all real and healthsome activity. Nothing but the highest, truest education, founded on God's Word, will make intelligent, attractive helpmates and house-mothers of those who "rock the cradle," and thus "rule the world." Nothing else will train our sons as tall, strong, straight "plants grown up in their youth,"

and our daughters as "corner-stones *polished* after the similitude of a palace."

It is no easy task, however, for "chief women" to confess that they desire to spend their gifts, natural and acquired, to further God's purposes; that they are seeking the bread of heaven,—bread not only to feed themselves, but to feed others! Some people, too, don't want to be fed; others want quite different sort of bread,—lighter and pleasanter, though baked with ashes; others are very particular who gives them bread, and only like it to come from teachers who but very rarely have time to teach them; and many think it the height of uncharitableness to suppose that bread is required by other souls than one's own. We need then to have all our words and ways sanctified, sweetened, and made wise by the Holy Spirit. Do any say, "But where and how shall I get this best gift?" the answer is of the simplest and plainest: ASK. (Luke xi. 13.)

After long lives of doubts, perplexies, sorrows, strife "to understand all mysteries and all knowledge," hard struggles after holiness, and much work of "wood, hay, and stubble" quality, it seems as if God were now giving a sweeter, clearer light at eventide to many of His own people, in which life were becoming far more simplified; asking, possess-

ing, and giving again, being its three characteristics. May the resting faith of the little child who lives and joys in his sweet gifted and giving life,—may the position of the quiet woman of Bethany, sitting and learning at the feet of Jesus,—become that of “all His saints.” (Deut. xxxiii. 3.) Oh, what rest, what easy service, what a lightsome life, what ensured wisdom and highest education !

VIII.

Diversity.



“Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities.”

TENNYSON.

Diversity.

"A gracious woman retaineth honour : and strong men retain riches."—PROV. xi. 16.

"Heirs together."—I PETER iii. 7.

MY object in this volume being to stir up "chief women," however feebly, to a sense of their vast responsibilities, I must confess that while I do desire not to arrogate undue position to my sex, yet that position does grow in importance the more thought that is bestowed on the subject. The views that some in the present day are accustomed to bring forward of the mere absolute "equality" of men and women, have always seemed to me singularly limited and unintelligent. It is true that St. Peter, in that noble co-heirship of the grace of life quoted above, recognizes a position of equality, and perchance he had in view when he wrote the words, a striking scene of old, in the plains of Moab, when "the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, The daughters of

Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their fathers' brethren." (Num. xxvii. 7.) And not heirs together only, but servants together also. "Those women which laboured *with me* in the Gospel," said St. Paul, "whose names are in the Book of Life." (Phil. iv. 3.) "If God had designed woman as man's master," wrote Augustine, "He would have taken her from his head; if as his slave, He would have taken her from His feet; but as He designed her for his companion and equal, He took her from his side."

In looking at the subject of education, both in the past and present, there can be little doubt that mental gifts are more equally bestowed by God on both than used to be believed. Were young men of seventeen turned loose from school or college, having spent three-quarters of their time in accomplishments, to be compared with our "finished" young ladies of the same age, we should have a better test of their respective intellects than at present. The truest and highest position of our sex, however, must ever be in what may be called the equality of diversity. In the very mode of creation, how wide the difference! Woman was "builded" (Gen. ii. 22, margin) equally by God, and in the image of God, though not of the dust of the ground, but taken from the sentient frame of a

created being. The fact and the uses of this diversity are so beautifully described by Tennyson, that I cannot resist quoting these well-known lines :—

“For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse
Yet in the long years liker must they grow,—
The man be more of woman, she of man :
He gain in sweetness and in moral worth,
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the child-like in the larger mind,
Till at the last she sets herself to man
Like perfect music unto noble words.” *

Wives of England, here is your truest gift,—so to use your diversity as thus to give that which is lacking to your husbands ! There is pleasant bread of love, gentleness, patience, and cheerfulness, needed by those who come back to their homes weary and hungry after the heat of the day : do you act then as bread-givers ? There is a gift which women have generally in greater degree and intensity than men,—adaptiveness, which is the very essence of companionship. Yet how often in married life this is forgotten ! No education that does not make women know how to adapt themselves as companions to their husbands can be called “higher,” for God’s design is that they

* “The Princess.”

should be not samemates, but "helpmates" (*i.e.*, literally something "over against him"*),—near and helpful: like, but diverse. What a good example of this do we find in the home and wifely work of Lady Lawrence. "Whatever her husband's occupation was, she applied herself to understand and share it. If she could help in it, she helped; if not, she sat by and sympathized. She had married a working man: with a bride's delight she set herself to becoming a working man's wife. It was her affair as much as his. The progress of the public work was his duty and her aim, and the enthusiasm never flagged; rather it burnt with a higher and steadier glow to her life's end. Those who have known her will bear witness that never had great public servant a help more meet for him."†

Even among the heathen, instances of conjugal devotion were not uncommon. It is to the Indian that we owe this beautiful proverb: "The hearth is not a stone, but a woman."‡ The farewell of Octavius Augustus to Livia was a noble one. While others were calling attention to his great

* The Bishop of Derry, in a Lecture at Norwich.

† Life of Sir Henry Lawrence.

‡ Quoted by the Bishop of Derry.

and glorious deeds, he turned to his wife and said, "Livia, remember how we have loved." Eponina, the wife of an exiled Roman of high degree, voluntarily left the world and its comforts to share a cavern with him, where she gave birth to two children. "Learn," said she to the Emperor, "that I have enjoyed more happiness in prolonging the days of your victim, and in the performance of my duties in a rude cavern, than you will ever enjoy in the splendours of your throne!" But in such cases it was but the devotion of diversity without equality. They were not "heirs together." It is therefore in Christianity that the true beauty of conjugal life attains its right position, because there it is the symbol of that highest system of gifts and givers,—of that truest, holiest companionship and abiding love which exists between the soul and Christ. Where do we find equality in diversity so marvelously displayed as in that Divine union,—that fellowship or partnership between the redeemed and the Redeemer? Like every other great and universally-acknowledged truth, this fails of its object if it does not enter practically into every married home of REAL Christendom,—making Christian husbands more like Christ,—making Christian wives more like the Bride-Church, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. v. 27—30.)

There is in the present day a sort of fashionable cant, transplanted from foreign soil, which speaks of "spiritual unions" as distinct from those ties sanctioned indeed by law, but where there is no true union of sympathies: or, in other words, unhappy marriages. Nay, it is even considered not unlawful for wives to seek in friendship with others of the opposite sex those sympathies which are denied at home, thus virtually "leaving" the unsympathetic husbands. There is not one word in Scripture to sanction this strange turning away from the bread-giving which God expects, especially from those to whom He has given more bread than to their life companions. It is noticeable that in the wonderful passage in which we find the parallel between married and redeemed life and love, the wives and husbands addressed were no "model" pairs: the one needed to be taught how to submit, and even how to "reverence," the other instructed how to "love." (Eph. v. 22, 25, 33.) But specific directions in completely unsympathetic unions are still more clearly given. The believing wife is not only distinctly forbidden to "leave" the unbelieving husband, even with this greatest of mental abysses between; she is still to be her husband's close, and (as we may gather from 1 Cor. vii. 13) his pleasing companion.

More than this, however: when unbelief is accompanied by its customary actual disobedience to God's Word, not even then is the wife, however superior she may think herself or be thought by others, to be relieved from what would be called her "unspiritual union," nor from her work of pleasant bread-giver. No: she is to give the Bread of Life—nay, even to be the "Word" to that unsympathetic husband: not to stand on one side of the gulf and he on the other, but to be close beside him, winning him by her conversation; not by her great human gifts, if she has any, but by her Christ-like gift, which she must get from Him: "a meek and quiet spirit." (1 Peter iii. 1—4)

I would not have dwelt so long on this point were it not that in the literature of fiction in these days (so eagerly devoured by our young ladies, who are to be the future "wives of England") we find this Scriptural view of marriage completely ignored, and dangerous shades of error introduced, which in time might bring among us the horrors of what has been described in Hepworth Dixon's "Spiritual Wives." That unsympathetic wedlock is the most difficult of all cases for those who have received freely to give freely, is an undoubted fact. But it would be well if this difficulty were looked in the face, and weighed in the balance before marriage

instead of after, both among real and fictitious young ladies. To go wilfully into such unions because of temporary impulse, earthly possessions, and good "establishments," is of itself such a mark of Inferiority, that it is doubly repulsive when afterwards Superiority is claimed as a plea for being unable to fulfil the duties thus wrongly assumed. To marry "only in the Lord,"—for Christian women of whatever degree, and for those who cannot honestly so designate themselves, to marry none but such as they "love," or can at all events "reverence,"—might deprive the novelist of materials, but would add much greater happiness to the "homes of England." Quaint old De Foe's estimate of a really well-educated woman would be a good motto for higher domestic education: "A woman, well-bred, well-taught, furnished with the additional accomplishments of knowledge and behaviour, is a creature beyond comparison. Her society is the emblem of sublime enjoyment. She is all softness and sweetness, love, wit, and delight."

The blessing of diversity is seen not only in every happy marriage, but in the relationships of brother and sister, in father and daughter, and very specially perhaps in mothers and sons. The mothers of great men have not generally been celebrated for the same sort of qualities which caused their

sons' greatness, but from the diligent cultivation of their own diverse gifts. Augustine said after his conversion, that it was "the perfect womanhood" of his mother which had had most influence over him. But far beyond the home circle this diversity meets us as the special gift of women, and perhaps peculiarly of "chief women." Look at the vastly different circles of influence in what is called "society." It would be difficult to say which wields most social influence,—those whose sphere is in Senate, deer forests, and county meetings, or those who govern the drawing-rooms of either town or country life; in both cases there is perhaps equal "action of presence," in however different a mode it may show itself. Both are, or ought to be, administrators. The one goeth forth to his labour in the morning, whether it be to stand before Kings, to build up family honours or family wealth, or to make and administer wise laws; while in Scripture language women equally "minister to," but in a diverse manner and place. They are to "GUIDE," not the State, but the "house" (1 Tim. v. 14),—they are to be "keepers" (or workers") at "home." (Titus ii. 5.) The word "guide" is peculiarly suggestive for "chief women," for it does not necessarily imply that actual house-work which would be unnecessary in their position; but it implies the

bringing to bear on this home-life those gifts of administration which women certainly have equally developed with men. These gifts we see wonderfully wrought out when ladies, set free from home-ties, are, as always ought to be the case, at the head of deaconess homes, hospitals, workhouses, etc., where their peculiar administrativeness is invaluable. And in these diverse ways may we not see the fulfilment of the wise Monarch's equal division of diverse gifts? "A gracious woman retaineth honour, and strong men retain riches." "Duty is the sublimest word in our language," was the noble enunciation of a celebrated American General; and it may well be that of each weak woman, taken with this other sweet motto, "Love makes duty light,"—that love of the great Master to whom our smallest duties are due, which is equally incumbent when earthly love is scanty or absent. "There is no fear of God in this place," was the stern and effectual rebuke of an indignant husband in his ill-ordered household; and he might equally have said, "There is no *love* of God" where He does not reign over the vessels of smallest quantity as well as over those which are of great and costly size.

Even in the very politics of a country, the diversity of woman may play a deeper, higher, and more integral part than were she to possess the same place

as "chief men." "A sufficient measure of civilization," said Emerson, "is the influence of good women." Questions have, and in all probability will again come before the Legislature, deeply affecting our sex. It would be well if the wives of our Peers and our M.P.'s were to study such, and take counsel about them with their husbands at home, so that gentle persuasive wisdom might be exerted. Because of the want of this quieter influence others are forced to the front, because "there were none to help."

Diversity, then, is one of the special gifts given to woman, which she must break down into bread for others; for TO GIVE is a Divine right, and no wrong is so great as that which interferes with the best bread-giving.

"The right to lead the soul to God
Along the path the Saviour trod,—
The path of meekness and of love,
The path of faith which leads above;
The path of patience under wrong,
The path in which the meek grow strong:
Such women's rights,—and God will bless,
And grant support or give success."

We have now glanced at the possible equality of women in some mental gifts, and at her equal sphere of diversity; but are we to stop there? Ah, no: we have now to consider her INFERIORITY.

In woman as she IS, we find two kinds of inferiority: one sort which she need not have, the other belonging to her by gift, which we would therefore call blessed, and which is the subject of the next chapter. No one can attentively compare the practical lives of men and women without acknowledging certain phases of inferiority which it behoves us as much as possible to get rid of, by God's rich grace and by the diligent cultivation of His gifts. Look, for instance, at our unreasonableness: far more frequently does this mar the mind of woman than of her husband, brother, or friend, with their wider range of education and thought. How difficult for a woman it ever is to look at all sides of a question; and how rapidly we jump to the conclusion which pleases us, with wonderfully small regard to the correctness of our reasoning! See, too, of what prejudice this is both cause and effect. One, herself of singularly broad and reasonable mind, might well say, "I should like to add a word to one of the petitions in the Litany, saying, 'Forgive us our sins, negligences, ignorances, and PREJUDICES.'" If this were only a mental defect, it might be the less dangerous; but with its accompanying heedlessness and want of thought, it is closely connected with that unruly member which is likened to the very small helm of a great ship.

(James iii. 4, 5.) In a curious diplomatic paper of an early Spanish Cortes, this humiliating and significant sentence occurs in connection with some serious political crisis: "The vexatious disputes of two women are an ordinary occurrence in the Courts of Princes!"

In the history of the Church, not to speak of the world, there has scarcely been any great work in which women's tongues have not either caused or threatened shipwreck. To how much misery and sin was Israel laid open by the imprudent gossip of the women who went out to meet Saul and David! The divisions caused in the Church of Philippi by those two dissentient women, Euodias and Syntyche, caused anxious thought to, and beseeching request from the Apostle at Rome. Truly we women cannot give pure bread, but that which is mixed with gravel and ashes, while we rest contented with such marks of inferiority as "nagging" tongues and unreasoning prejudices—signs of the fall,—from which we can only be rescued by the *Great Remedy*.

True woman cannot take her right place, and occupy her proper sphere, without seeking, finding, and exhibiting some special features of likeness to Him who came to do His great work as the meek and lowly One, in silence and subjection of spirit. It has indeed been said that there

is something of the womanhood in our blessed Lord's human nature,—the ministrative and domestic thoughtfulness, the gifts of swift perception and sensitive suffering, and still more the much maligned gift of subjection. He took on Him the form of a servant; He was subject unto earthly and misunderstanding parents; He became obedient unto death. His highest glory was not to be ministered unto, but to minister. How distasteful, then, in His eyes must be the independence of the yoke,—the bold claims for "perfect equality," which meet us in the present day,—the superficial distaste for homely duties and meek obedience to the yoke and likeness of Christ (Matt. xi. 29),—the assumption of gifts, which disqualify their possessors from following in the path of Him in whom was hid all the treasures of the Godhead, and yet whose expressed command was, in full knowledge of all it would imply, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." As more and more women grow to be *THUS* more and more like Christ, so will that time of national and political blessing draw the nearer when "there shall be no complaining in our streets." (Ps. cxliv. 14.)

IX.

Strength and Weakness.

“The servant trying to be true,
Faithful to higher will,
In hours of weakness is not lost,
But is a servant still.

“And if it may not be that strength
Be granted, as of yore,
Pensioned by love’s sweet bounty, still
Nothing can harm me more.

“Yet feeble knees can bend in prayer,
Sad hearts a strain upraise,
Weak hands may find some labour low,
And *any* life some praise.”

Strength and Weakness.

"Let the weak say I am strong."—JERL iii. 10.

THE words "burden" and "gift" are synonymous in Hebrew (Ps. lv. 22, marg.), and women have a gifted burden of inferiority which we would not be rid of if we could,—that which is implied in Scripture when woman is called the "weaker vessel" (1 Peter iii. 7): weaker in voice, brain, nerves, thews and muscles, woman must necessarily be, and this of itself constitutes an inferiority so decided, that it would seem to set the vexed question at rest for ever. In this very inferiority, however, when meekly accepted, may we find our best blessing, nay, our richest mode of bread-giving. What dependence upon the Strong for strength which is peculiarly "sufficient" for our weakness! What depths of sympathy and rich diversity of experience and treasures of humility should we gain from our very weakness! Bodily weakness is generally accompanied with more or

less of bodily suffering. How many invalid women are there at this moment in boudoir, dressing-room, or luxurious bedroom of our country, and what blessings may such become! If our "burden" be cast on the Lord, then it becomes a "gift;" and a gift, or "present," is synonymous with a "blessing." (2 Cor. ix. 5, marg.; 1 Sam. xxv. 27, marg.) Each sorrowful suffering life of each weak woman is a rich gift to be shared with others,—a "blessing" even to husband, children, neighbours, and servants. It is the bread-corn that is bruised (Is. xxviii. 28; Lev. ii. 14), not weeds and useless grasses. Ah: how often do we hear from such sick-beds the murmuring tones, "I can do nothing: I am useless!" As reasonable a moan as if the bread-corn were to complain of its bruising!

There are few of us who cannot recall some such saint-like sufferer, from whose full ears were beaten out rich bread to give to others, and whose sick-room was a very treasure-house for souls. My own memory instinctively turns to one, who more than any I ever saw, was an exemplification of much strength in much weakness, and whose daily, hourly burdens of suffering were truly turned into gifts, to give back in praise to the Giver and in blessing to surroundings. With the most life-like instincts and energies, with heart-treasured recollections of breezy

mountains and "springing steps on the heather," and free healthful roaming by dell and brae, she was yet a sweet, bright, contented "prisoner of the Lord," in shaded sick-room or slow Bath chair; and this is one of the many voices with which she, being dead, now speaketh to us.

"Nay, hush : I may not murmur !
My Father chooseth well ;
Some 'better thing' He gives me
Than my dim sight can tell.

"He sends me blessing, richer
And fuller than I sought ;
For He could tell the meaning
Of prayers beyond my thought.

"What though the gift He giveth
Comes with the weight of pain :
His loving-kindness turneth
All seeming loss to gain.

"And sweetest is the anguish
Of bruised heart and will,—
The rest of lying helpless :
Thy peace around me still."

Hetty Bowman's "Songs Amid the Shadows."

"Yield your bodies a living sacrifice," is a command from the One Great Sacrifice, and is surely a special message to many a weak suffering woman at this moment. Many such have spirits as brave and active as any man, and when they read this Divine message, oftentimes they look on it as a call

to bodily action, and they murmur because they cannot obey. But the true sacrifice was what lay meek as a lamb and motionless as a log; and so the living sacrifice may be peculiarly and reasonably offered up by those whose feet cannot run, whose voices cannot speak, whose hands cannot labour. Then comes the true health of the soul, when emptied of its own will it is filled with the Spirit of Christ. Thus one noble sufferer could say, "It is not my soul that is sick, it is only my body;"* and another could say, after a long illness, "All is well: well for ever! I see, wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory."†

I went through the Mint lately, and oh, what precious lessons to be learned there of the care and work needed to remove all blemishes, all dissimilarity to the well-cut likeness and superscription of the Monarch! The rich golden coins sent out to bless the world, could, with no greater reason than the bread-corn, complain of the pains and the wrench and the screw of the previous processes. Let then the weak ones of the earth be thankful for their gifts of burdens,—only useful gifts, however, when "cast on" the

* The Grand-Duchess Augusta.

† Lady Huntingdon.

Burden-Bearer,—He who loves to abide in us so near and so close, that there need be no effort even in casting the burden on Him.

In the north of Scotland there is a fine old ruined castle, on the banks of the picturesque Deveron, on the battlements of which are seen what to short-sighted eyes appear to be only architectural ornaments, but on closer inspection these words appear in large letters: "TO. THAES. THAT. LOVE. GOD. AL: THINGS. VIRKIS. TO. THE. BEST." When the last Duchess of Gordon, as a young bride, first saw the picturesque ruins of Huntley Castle, her heart was burdened with many cares; and as she lingered a few moments behind the gay party, a bright beam of sunlight shone on the old raised letters, enabling her to read the comfortable message, which never afterwards failed in its sweet mission in her heart and home. It was said in her future life, that she always delighted in telling others what was contained in Rom viii. 28. In the sick-room, these two words, "All things," if simply believed by those who love God,—and, blessed root and fruit, are loved by Him,—turn that dark inactive place into a chamber of sweet and bright energies: we feeling unable,—oh, so unable to work!—but all things working for us, working in us; aye, and God even working by and with us.

"Ill that God blesses is unblended good,
And unblessed good is ill ;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will."

"Ah," but says some sufferer, "I can't see light. All is dark, from the very nature of my malady!" Try the experiment, then, of thanking God for the darkness, and for having prepared a place and a way of service, even in the night. He promises in one part of His Word, "All things" as possible good,—in which jaundice, spleen, liver, diseased nerves, and dyspeptic gloom, *must* have their place ; so here in another He graciously explains it: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him TRUST in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." (Is 1. 10.) Two things go together in what may be called night-service,—trust and praise. "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord." (Ps. cxxxiv. 1.) And compare the service of song, night as well as day, with Job's "songs in the night." (1 Chron ix. 33, and Job xxxv. 10.) A living poetess, gifted with breathing burning words, writes thus on this very subject:—

"Whilst we are sleeping, those to whom the King
Has measured out a cup of sorrow, sweet
With His dear love, yet very hard to drink,

Are waking in His temple, and the eyes
That cannot sleep for sorrow or for pain,
Are lifted up to heaven ; and sweet low songs,
Broken by patient tears, arise to God.
Bless ye the Lord, ye servants of the Lord,
Which stand by night within His holy place,
To give Him worship ! Ye are priests to Him,
And minister around the altar, pale,
Yet joyful in the night. The priests must serve,
Each in his course, and *we* must stand in turn ;
Awake with sorrow, in the temple dim,
To bless the Lord by night. We will not fear,
When we are called at midnight by some stroke
Of sudden pain, to rise and minister
Before the Lord. We, too, will bless His name
In the solemn night, and stretch our hands to Him."

"Ezekiel and other Poems." B. M.

It is not uncommon when these treasures of darkness (Is. xlv. 3) are sent, to lose the blessing simply by the prepossession that we are in the dark, that it is an evil thing, and that there is no light for us. But there is NO darkness to the believer without its light, if only we knew where to look for it. Trust and praise are the two candles, but the fountain of light is in the living Christ, who is the "Very Light." When trust is at its lowest glimmer, and praise seems an impossibility, let us learn a lesson from the old man who lived in a dark room in a dark lane, yet a treasured potted plant grew there, bloomed, and prospered. "What do you do to your plant?" said a neighbour; and the old

man told how he did nothing but hold it up to the sun, which every day beamed for an hour or two through the upper window-panes, *letting* it be shone upon and fed and strengthened, turning it round and round, so that it got all the light it COULD get. Let us so deal with our dark hearts and gloomy hours. Let Christ Himself shine upon them. Don't lose an opportunity of the light; believe in the light; expect the light; and light will come, because the light IS Christ, and Christ IS light.

There is an element of work in the sick-room not so much thought of as might be. An eminent writer once declined engaging in some literary enterprise, because he was "storing up the fuel." Just so may the invalids do in their retirement,—store up the fuel for further use. There is a remarkable connection between fuel, warmth, light, and service. One day, as the late learned Dr. Duncan, of Edinburgh, was looking into the fire, as people have a wont of doing, he thought aloud, "For centuries the Lord was filling the coal-cellars; that flame is a collection of sunbeams which God shut up in the coal for us." The dark sick-room may be something of a coal-cellar, full of the elements of light and heat, which are some day to come out into full work and blessed use. Be thankful for, and store up every bit of fuel. This is one way in which your "all things"

may be working cheerily together. These painful symptoms, that distressing nervous sensation, may one day make you a sweeter minister to some other sufferer. Or if you can pray, what blessed light and warmth may come out of that fuel into your friend's work at the other side of the globe, or into your own, when the illness has done its work and you go forth again into open-air service! Or if you are able to read and meditate over but one verse of God's Word, who can tell what living, loving message you may be storing up for the very next needy soul that comes within your ken, or for one that you may not see for years? The sunbeams and the warm flames stay long in the black coal, yet who supposes they are not there? Or if you cannot even read or pray, oh, then you can *look* and *lean*, and let the Spirit intercede for you with "groanings that cannot be uttered!" And what rich fuel may come from thence! Even if the sickness be for death, what blazing light and warmth may come forth at the last hour, to help and comfort others in bondage to the fear of death! We think too little of preparing fuel for death-bed work. A recent death-bed, full of the steadiest peace and hope, owed much of its sunshine to simple prayer. The sufferer would not let request be made for recovery, only for an "abundant en-

trance;" and so for days and nights a cloud of "incense" went up from public assemblies, and from social groups, and from lonely chambers, that this man might enter joyfully into the city. And full and true came the answer. "I see the King's liveries," said he, gladly, at one time; and in "perfect peace" the noble intellect and the saved soul passed to his God and Saviour. Much happy service for their Lord may saints, thus strengthened, do in the hearts and souls of those left behind.

There has seldom been a more noted instance of storing and spending of sick-room fuel, than in the case of an Irish lady, the late Miss Henrietta Warren, who but lately was taken home from a life of singular suffering and service. Here is an account of some of the tangible work she was permitted to accomplish. "For many years she was a large contributor to the Religious Tract Society. In early life she manifested the literary taste and judgment which afterwards, under the Divine guidance and blessing, enabled her to give full and free expression to the greatest truths, in the simplest and most familiar language. Her busy fingers were also employed in light work, such as needed no pressure to send the needle through. Most of her friends know the pretty collars and cuffs which she used to send them, sometimes as

presents, sometimes to be disposed of kindly by them in aid of her 'charity purse,' which was anything but 'a bag with holes,' for it was always giving out, as it has been well observed, 'at the right end,' as it was always being, in GOD'S gracious providence, replenished. For many years she made large collections, much exceeding £1,000 per annum, for various religious societies, chiefly connected with the Irish Church Missions. She had also a very large correspondence. It seems as if even comparative strangers divined her powers of sympathy, for they poured out to her their sorrows and perplexities, and they received in return 'a word in season.'" A friend in Brighton, writing upon this subject, says: "Some years ago she began a correspondence with me, which I have ever since regarded as one admitting me to no ordinary enjoyment. Her sympathy and chastened experience were a great help. Sometimes in times of trial I have looked out one of her letters and read it, as that which would do me more good than any book." But the work which she took the deepest interest in was that connected with the Clergy Daughters' School. When she was able to receive visitors she reserved all her strength for a visit from two or three of the girls, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when she saw each alone, and tried, as she would

say, to have a "heart talk" with them. She also selected with the greatest care, and afterwards purchased, books for the library of their school; and her very last work was the preparation of little Christmas gifts for some of the inmates. But there was the more subtle essence of service, if one might so speak, which pervaded the atmosphere of her ministering life. "We," says Mrs. Bradshaw,—"*we*, who moved to and fro amidst large families,—*we*, who felt our burdens press heavily upon us day by day—now the household, now the sick child,—*we*, who had weighty charge of the Master's work,—*we*, whose young hearts bounded with joy and health,—*we*, whose early years were under masters and teachers,—one by one, we wended our way to that sacred room, in presence of which every step was softened, and every thought was stilled. But, the door once opened, and then closed on us, *alone* with her, how involuntarily our lips were unsealed! how quickly our thoughts flowed in to her, and thence on higher! Unconsciously, our burdens of weal and woe were shared *at once*. She was in our *very midst*, whether of the little child who loved the bright, joyous, loving sympathy which greeted it, or the aged minister who longed for the quiet rest and the soothing, helpful words which awaited his expected call. The school-girl, with all her home

sympathies and home sickness, would alike be felt for and ministered to; or the overtaxed worker, who found repose in the fulness of *understood* words and thoughts and plans. . . . Yes: we felt her truly one of ourselves. None understood us as she did, none remembered all our little labyrinths but herself. None could, we felt so sure, plead for us in prayer, as we knew she did; none received our little gifts so gratefully, so lovingly. *We* seemed to surround her, even as she encompassed us, moving amidst life's broad and distant pathways." And then all unexpectedly came the death-bed ministrations, her simple but emphatic utterances having a message of cheer and comfort to many timid hearts. On the 28th of December, 1871, she said, 'Am I dying?' Her sister replied, 'Yes, dearest, you are very near home. Is Jesus with you?' 'Oh, indeed He is!' 'Are you afraid?' 'NOT ONE BIT!' And in a few minutes she saw and was with Jesus 'as He is.'*

The happy, lightsome work and life of trust in a sick-room, has also in it the element of medical help. Those of us who have known much of illness, can confess with sorrow how much self-occupation grows into a habit; how symptoms are

* Originally printed in "Woman's Work."

dwelt on, and pulses are felt, and gloomy anticipations are cherished, rather than combated. But CHRIST in the heart, and His service in the thoughts, give such brighter, better occupation, that there is no manner of doubt that the physical frame DOES feel the better of it, and even the most worldly physicians might well welcome the aid.

Those who have had much to do with the noble and ancient work of medical missions, know how remarkably the healing power of the Double Physician seems to be blessed and augmented. Is it not just because they,—more than other men of skill,—bring unto the CHRIST, as in the old days, “all that are diseased”? (Mark i. 32.) What a thrilling medical mission hymn this is, which I cannot help quoting:—

“At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay;
Oh, in what divers pains they met!
Oh, with what joy they went away!

“Once more 'tis eventide, and we
Oppress'd with various ills draw near;
What if Thy smile we cannot see?
We know and feel that Thou art here.

“O Saviour Christ, our woes dispel;
For some are sick, and some are sad,
And some have never loved Thee well,
And some have lost the love they had;

"And some have found the world is vain,
Yet from the world they break not free ;
And some have friends who give them pain,
Yet have not sought a friend in Thee.

"Thy touch has still its ancient power ;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall :
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all."

We are too apt to forget that the Christ of to-day is the Christ of yesterday. He loved to be asked to heal then, and He loves to be asked to heal now. The Father had then "given Him power over all flesh," and it has not been taken away from Him. Talk as we may about the love of God in Christ, there is an undefined lurking feeling when under long pressure of trial, that God really likes to give us pain, or at least that He could easily spare us, but does not choose to do so. Ah, how this does despite to the sympathetic heart of the Godhead ! Long before the Saviour Man "suffered" for us, —long before the ascended Saviour remembered from experience the ills that surround the tempted, —it was said, "In all their affliction He was afflicted." (Is. lxiii. 9.) "If needs be," we are to be in heaviness through manifold trials, that the "proving of our faith" may be to the praise and glory of Jesus Christ. (Another reading of 1 Peter i. 7.) But if by prayer we get faith from the joyful and willing Giver of faith, that does not need the furnace, then

it actually saves a sorrow to the heart of the loving Father. The chastened child knows that it suffers because of the loving wisdom of its parent; but what parent rejoices not more over the child that does not need the chastening? What true home is there in which chastening is not the exception, the "strange work" of the house? So with the Lord our Father (Is. xxviii. 21): He has to "call for" the needed instrument of punishment (Ps. cv. 16; Hag. i. 11), either for nation or individual; and He provides ways of doing without it. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Now ye are clean through the Word" (John xv. 3); as in older days "He sent His Word, and healed them." (Ps. cvii. 20.) And taking this line of thought, the old writer Calamy said, "There are three houses: the house of instruction, the house of correction, and the house of destruction:" *i.e.*, there are those who listen to and obey the Word of Christ, and need not the correction; while there are those who need to be brought to the Word by chastening, and others who, refusing both, go down into destruction.

As long as there are places in heaven and hell for the redeemed and the lost to occupy, so long must there be sorrow and bereavement and mortal disease, which neither faith nor prayer can obviate. And it is remarkable that while raising the dead was part

of the medical missionary work of Christ and of His disciples, there is no mention of it in the orders for believing work of the future. Yet James v. 14, 15, and Mark xvi. 18, would not have been left on record had they not a meaning for us now as then. May this not be, therefore, that while there are cases of sickness which *are* unto death, or have seeds of death in them which cannot thus come under the healing processes of faith, there are yet many chronic maladies, especially those of mental and nervous disease, and those which baffle the skill of "many physicians," which *would*, nay, which *do* yield to faith and prayer, when, and only when the "needs be" is accomplished, and the Loving Heart can feel, as in the case of Job, that it is enough, and that the child may be set free.

There are many trials in daily life which come far short of the great sorrows of confirmed illness and suffering, and for which there is a constant "needs be" in the united elements of "things present," and our feminine constitution of mind and nerves; and in such we may find the thought of each burden being God's own gift, a daily comfort and help. There is not a care or trouble even to the most minute, which it does not peculiarly lighten; try it, dear readers, the next small cause of worry that comes like a cloud between you and "perfect

peace." Pause in it, and say to yourself, "Now here is a gift from God: He means me to use it, not to fuss over it." And let the thought pass into a prayer,—“Teach me so to use it;” and where is the worry? Why you will have rolled it off from yourself on to God, and in its place you will find a sweet thankful peace. It is truly marvellous how this is found to check the cross word and lighten the glooming brow. Is not this the only way to make “things present” not only unable to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, but able to become gifts of God? (Comp. Rom. viii. 38, 39, with 1 Cor. iii. 22.)

But what about the many troubles which we women are apt to make for ourselves, and which indeed form the great mass of our existing discomfort in this world, and perhaps as signal a token as any of our inferiority to our brethren,—can we expect God to banish these in this easy way? Let us try the same process anyhow. There is surely *no* exception made when one Apostle speaks of “casting ALL your care upon Him, for He careth for you;” or when another commands us “to be careful for NOTHING, but in EVERYTHING to let your requests be made known unto God.” The very act of doing so in fact might be found to help us, as with an Ithuriel-like spear, to distinguish between the

true and the false ; and in the presence of Him to whom we thus draw near, be very sure of it, the burden that is no gift of God will fall off and disappear. Some people, that is to say, some women, are genuinely afraid of being happy, sometimes from a superstitious dread of the suffering which they think must follow ; while others have a certain amount of pleasure in being miserable, strange as it sounds ! I once knew a richly-gifted one who really was in her element when she had a "good few" grievances ; and if one or two were, perchance, of a romantic or mysterious nature, why so much the better ! When the true joy of life began to shine upon her, she was one day taxed with this old love of being miserable, and she was obliged, with half-laughing and half-tearful frankness, to acknowledge the still lingering fact. Though neither of these conditions are, I believe, common to confess frankly, both are by no means rare in occurrence. "The joy of the Lord," which is "your strength" (Neh. viii. 10), is needed to enable any of us to obey the accompanying precious command, "Neither be ye sorry ;" and it will be found that this power of joy is alone mighty enough to cure either our sickly morbid fear of happiness or love of misery, for "*healing*" as well as joy goes forth with the "Sun of righteousness." (Mal. iv. 2.)

X.

Polishing and Politics.



“There is predominance in heaven, and grades
Of lower and superior sanctities :
All are not equal there ; for brotherhood
And freedom both abhor equality,
The very badge of serfdom : only there
It is the true nobility of worth,
The aristocracy of gentleness,
The power of goodness and of doing good.” *

• Rev. E. Bickersteth's “Yesterday, To-day, and For Ever.”

Polishing and Politics.

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame : but with the lowly is wisdom."—PROV. xi. 2.

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war : but one sinner destroyeth much good."—ECCLES. ix. 18.

NO equality in heaven! Neither among those who shine as the firmament for ever and ever, nor among those bright types which glitter night after night in our blue heavens; for "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: so also is the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.) No doctrine of equality in the Scriptures, where we distinctly read of some that were "more noble" than others; of some also who had one talent, and others who had two, five, and ten talents gifted to them. Moreover, in this wonderful code of social as well as moral law, we find even that delicate subject of precedence noted, although carefully guarded, so that equality of human place or position is nowhere inculcated. (Prov. xxvi.

6, 7 ; Luke xiv. 8—10.) Nay, no equality of place even in the completed glory of the society to come, where we find the great multitude of the redeemed standing "before the throne," while the meek-eyed angels stand in their places, "round about" the more honoured saints.

In a certain sense, however, there IS equality: inequality itself being a gift, there are three points of equality to be noticed. The giver is the same, the object of gifts is the same (compare Ps. ciii. 20—22, and cxlviii. 8, with Matt. xxv. 21, 40), and the instruments wherewith to use the gifts are the same. One blood (Acts xvii. 26), one sort of heart (Prov. xxvii. 19), the same framework of feet to run in His ways, and hands to work out His will. What a difference there would be in our social system! what a putting to rights of all sorts of wrongs would be accomplished if inequality were but fairly and practically acknowledged to be a gift of God, and if equality were seen to consist in each position of life being alike gifts, and alike capable of being used to the very uttermost for the glory of God! A very Utopia, some would say ; but rather let us call it simply the state which would necessarily be produced were the never impossible precepts of the Word of God carried into practice. Hence it follows that every wilful

departure from that standard is not the necessary breaking down of a Utopia, but actual transgression of the laws of God's kingdom as distinct from that of the Prince of this world. There is much political despondency at present: statesmen are at a fault,—England has lost much of her prestige,—some people prophecy the ruin of the country from democracy,—others denounce the progress of aristocracy; and it is emphatically a time when “complainings are heard in the streets.” Have women nothing to do with this state of things? Are politics,—*i.e.*, the history of the times in which they live,—quite above their participation in and influence over? Every woman that breathes is taking part in the politics of her country, whether she knows it or not. She that dwells at home among her own people as much, and to say the least as effectively, as those who are agitating for recognised place and power. A French author writes, “Qu'on observe ce que se passe autour de nous: on trouvera partout la femme dans le monde telle que le poète peint Agrippine dans le sénat ‘derrière un voile, invisible et présente.’” This truth of woman's veiled presence in political work and influence has been largely recognised with regard to women of the working classes. Hardly a writer upon social science but points out what

bad national effects are produced by the comfortless homes and improvident wives of our labourers and artizans. Reformatories and prisons, nay, even the gallows, are said, and truly, to be fed largely from this very source. But if this be true of the uneducated, overworked, untrained women of the poor, what position does the "chief woman" take in the history of her country? If *her* sons are not like well-grown plants, and her daughters are destitute of the true palace polishing,—if *she* cultivates not the wisdom which is better than weapons of war, and is filled with the pride which bringeth shame, is there to be no evil result to her country? Will there not, on the contrary, be as much, or rather more "good" to be "destroyed," than by the conduct of those to whom little has been given, and of whom therefore less will be required? Let us turn for the last time to that Psalm (cxliv. 11—15) which contained so much suggestive matter for our earlier chapters. David takes a wide view of politics. Notice how, with sequence after sequence, he connects the prosperity of a nation, and the absence of political discontent, with the victory over vanity and falsehood, and with the true polish of courtly education: "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand

of falsehood: that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace: that our garners may be full, affording all manner of store . . . that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

Let us look at some ways then in which "chief women" have it in their power, with their gifts of solid yet polished education, materially to increase the prosperity of England. "Righteousness exalteth a nation," says the wise man, and "wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of the times," says also the prophet of the Lord, with that impressive mixture of the practical, which is so striking in the fervid writings of Isaiah. It is the fashion in romances of the day to look down on such work as Sunday-schools, district visiting, and such like, as unworthy of heroines who desire to accomplish great and mystical good. Yet each "chief woman" who strives by the "quiet wisdom," which cometh from the Lord, to scatter words of teaching, of heavenly wisdom, of true education, is in reality helping on the stability of her times,—is wielding instruments which, on God's authority,

are "better than weapons of war." Still however it might be said, "What do ye more than others?" were this all. But "chief women" have a gift in their power which other women have not been given, and that is the influence of their peculiar station. The ramifications of social influence are so wide-spread and bewildering that few care to follow them. If one sinner destroyeth much good, it necessarily follows that one unconscientious or worldly or impure or haughty "chief woman" is exactly in the same position: a destroyer. Each woman of a certain position is surrounded by clusters of souls who *are* influenced by her example, who watch narrowly, and imitate her ways, and who make her an excuse for much evil, if that is the direction in which her vane turns. How much better the poor women of a neighbourhood might be, nay, I would venture to say *are*, when they see that the "chief women" are examples of home, conjugal, and parental devotion and steadiness, and that "those who wear a coronet and pray," do so with such reality as to make them practice also the duties of their position. Were this more generally the case, I believe the work-houses, reformatories, and prisons would be as effectually influenced as by a crusade against the bad habits of the working women, unassisted

by the personal example of their sisters in the upper classes.

It cannot be denied that in the world in general, and even in our constitutional and prosperous England, there is a war of classes going on; and if any class be destitute of the better weapons of wisdom, whether they know it or not, they are wielding the worse weapons of war, and thus helping on the civil strife. "To make one pauper there go many sins," said Carlyle; and he might have added, "of many people." So, also, wherever there is a deadly discontent among the nations, whenever there be a complaining in our streets, we may be sure that there are two parties to the evil,—those who complain, and those who have helped to cause complaint. It will generally be found that a species of kleptomania is more or less at the root of class discontent: *i.e.*, a desire, which becomes irresistible on all sides, to keep and use for self the gifts bestowed by God to use for others. Wherever we find exclusiveness,—the caste of Christendom,—we may be sure that there exists a certain amount of kleptomania. Exclusiveness is generally accompanied, moreover, by that special heathen element of looking down upon others, and shrinking from contact with those of one blood, one sort of heart, and each equally God-gifted with some gifts. Fastidiousness is a quality

which people are so far from being ashamed of, that it is considered a thing rather to be boasted of, a sign indeed of refinement and cultivation. Yet it is not found in the example and life of Him, the pure, and therefore the truly sensitive, whose hand was ever ready to be upon the loathsome, whose heart was ever open to those incapable of understanding Him, whose holy person sat down to meat with the publican and Pharisee, alike uncongenial to Him. Neither is pride, the mother of fastidiousness, considered either shameful to its possessor or hurtful to others, by the majority of "chief women." It is on the contrary considered a good old-fashioned sort of virtue, and even among Christian women in high places the protest against it is very faint and feeble, except in some bright instances. This is but another instance of the successful attempts in these days to render obsolete the Word of God; which seems to be the root of all our evils. Let us see how beautifully the teaching of the Old and New Testament accord on this point; and it is good to notice that these utterances come from Solomon the King and from Christ the God. "He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbours." "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with

the proud." (Prov. xi. 12 ; xvii. 18, 19.) "Learn of ME, for I am meek and lowly of heart." (Matt. xi. 29.)

There is no doubt, generally speaking, that the chiefer the woman, if I may use the expression, the less offensively will the disregard of these Scriptures show : *i.e.*, the more certain the position, the fewer efforts needed to maintain it,—the more thorough the outward "polish," the less disturbance of its observances will take place. Thus it was said of the Electress Sophia of Hanover, granddaughter of Queen Mary Stuart, and ancestress of our own Queen, that "she was the most perfect lady in Europe ;" and a characteristic proof of this we find in these words : "She was ever mindful to avoid voluntarily diminishing any one in his own opinion." Yet even in such cases, unless the "polishing" arises from the rule of Scripture, there may be the very same bitter root within : the snake may be hid in the flowers, the poison in the goblet of sweet wine.

If the evil were, or could be confined entirely to the comparatively small class of "chief women," it might not be so injurious ; but evil cannot stand alone, or be circumscribed ; it must spread like a tree, and have both root and fruit. There is in Great Britain a certain ugly thing, yclept by Thackeray,

"snobbishness," by Carlyle, "flunkeyism," which our sex is certainly not exempted from ; yet it is the abuse of a thing useful, nay even beautiful in itself,—the influence of God-bestowed gifts of inequality. The influence of "chief women" over their sisters of the middle class is even more marked and spreading than over the poor. So we find this thing,—PRIDE,—with exclusiveness, fastidiousness, and the rest of its progeny, rooting and fruiting through all classes. The women of the middle classes imitate and sometimes exaggerate the upper ; while their influence again goes down and down, till the spirit of caste, like the follies of expensive and unseemly dress, may be found pervading classes where its presence seems impossible and ridiculous. About the end of the reign of Louis XV., exclusiveness and precedence were carried to a great length in Paris. It is related that a lady of high rank, in 1780, wanted a coachman, and found one likely to suit her. "But," said he, "before engaging myself, I should like to know to whom my lady gives precedence in the streets?" She replied, "To anyone: I wait for my turn." "Oh, then," he answered, "Madame will not do for me. I never give place to any one but Princes of the blood." This man was Girard, the public accuser of 1793, who sent to the

scaffold the very aristocrats he thought not aristocratic enough.*

Mothers, governesses, or those who have had much to do with middle-class "girls of the period," know to what an extreme even those professing a higher Christian standard carry their disobedience to God's precept,—“that ye have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons” (James ii. 1); while even with regard to the ways of the world, their assumption, self-assertion, and would-be exclusiveness, might well excite a smile in the “chief women” whom they not only imitate, but to whom they hope to be thereby assimilated. Nothing creates so surely weapons of war in a country, as this habit of looking down on others half a step, one step, or many steps lower in degree.

What then is the cure for such a wide-spread evil? Not certainly an overturn of the balance of society, such as in the very presence of the evil, one does occasionally hear of taking place,—such as ladies dancing with their footmen and noblemen with their housemaids, or a proclamation of *Liberté*, *Egalité*, and *Fraternité* throughout the land. Slow and difficult indeed must be the healing process, for it can only be done by individual cures. Let

* Bungener's "Voltaire and his Times."

the great Scripture principle of *gift* be once fairly recognised, and things and persons fall into their "proper place," with a far higher and deeper signification than that usually affixed to these words.

"Happy is he who lives to understand
Not human nature only, but explores
All nature ; to the end that he may find
God's law that governs each,—that does assign
To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of things,
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign man."

The dandelion and daisy by the roadside, the rose on the parterre, the date-palm in the desert, the oak in the forest,—each have given to them their appointed place and work ; so also have the different orders and degrees and shades of difference in the living family: the worm, the man, and the archangel, with their widely differing work and position, are alike equal in respect of being God's servants, appointed to "do His pleasure." With what true importance does this invest the whole of life and society ! The Peeress has given to her that rank of which it might be said,—

"Take it up tenderly,
Use it with care."

So also the untitled woman of London life and "fashion ;" so also they who live in the "ceiled houses" of country circles ; so also the wives of

professional and learned men ; so also governesses ; so also dressmakers, seamstresses, farmer's wives, domestic servants, etc., etc.,—each with a position complete and honourable in itself, containing all the materials for acceptably serving God, without either looking up or looking down. Such acceptance of gifts would produce indeed what may be called Bible politics : a system of God-respect, which always produces self-lowliness as well as self-respect. A well-known writer* has said, "He that thinks, will always think himself little. Men who have no brains are always great men ; but those who think must think their pride down, if God be with them in their thinking ;" and the necessary union of self-respect with self-knowledge is beautifully thus rendered by Wordsworth :—

... "Henceforth be warned, and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness ; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing hath faculties
Which he has never used : that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one
The least of nature's work,—one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever. Oh, be wiser, thou !
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,

* Spurgeon.

True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect and still revere himself
In lowliness of heart."

What reverence between classes, too, this would produce,—class keeping step with class, though still also keeping rank like the thousands of Israel,—each pitching by their own standard, neither ashamed nor proud of the ensigns of their fathers' house. (Num. ii. 34.) "There is no man mean for whom the Lord has gone to His death," is the recorded saying of a royal lady. Each may therefore be thankful for their gift of place, be it higher or be it lower! Thus none would attach that overweening importance to position which produces either exaggerated imitation on the one hand, or that protest against it, which is in these days a true "weapon of war" placed in dangerous hands.

The recognition of inequality as a gift will also prevent its undue depreciation even by those who possess most of it, as is sometimes seen. The following lines are said to have been either written, or peculiar favourites of a lady of high rank:—

"Dear Lord, I ask no crown from Thee,
No robe with rich perfume;
The meanest place will do for me,
And in the meanest room."

But beautiful as is the thought, it must not be

forgotten that where God *gives* the robe and crown, though not to be asked for, there may be, and, thank God, often is as true—nay, far truer—a spirit of humility and obedience, as in “the meanest place and lowest room,” when such are deliberately chosen, by going *out* of God’s appointed station.

There is a story told of blessing humbly imparted and meekly received in what might be called the extremes of society. A chimney-sweep was sent for to sweep the chimneys of a stately west-end mansion. He left two tracts: one for the maid, another which he requested her to give to her mistress. The lady had friends with her when the tract was handed in on a silver salver. “Come,” said she, “I must have some fun with this eccentric sweep!” He was sent for; but the fun consisted in his quiet, calm assertion that he was a saved sinner, full of joy in the Lord Jesus Christ, who had taken from him “all fear of death.” He was lightly dismissed. But seven years after a liveried servant stood one day at the sweep’s door: the lady was dying, and had sent for him. “Tell me,” she said, “HOW the fear of death was taken from you.” He took out his Bible, ever at hand, and read these words: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

And it is related that the Word of God did for that soul what it has done for millions more. Who can doubt that the soul of the lady will be a bright gem in the "eternal crown" of the sweep!

Let us take as an illustration of the beauty of holy wisdom in "chief women," the truly noble and beautiful Louise, Queen of Frederick William III., of Prussia. Perhaps of all women of high degree, who have suffered deeply, she is conspicuous from the rare fact that her light shone as brightly in prosperity as in adversity. In her home-circle of wedded and maternal love,—in her regal dignities and charities,—in her celebrated interview with Napoleon I.,—in all the misfortunes of her country, and on her suffering death-bed, she was ever the same Christian woman, and was thus described by the Archbishop Borowski: "In her presence one is reminded of the words of St. Peter, who describes the outward adorning of holy women to consist not in plaiting the hair, and wearing gold, and putting on apparel, but in the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. It is a great happiness to me to know that all her convictions, her hopes, and her confidence, are founded on the promises contained in the sacred Scriptures." While a humble miner's testimony was: "In all my life I never saw such a one: she

looked grand like a Queen, but was as gentle as a child, and had the sweetest smile,—just for all the world like my dead blessed mother.” The following anecdote bears so exactly upon part of our subject, that I cannot forbear giving it in full: “It chanced one day, when there was a Court held at Magdeburg, that a lady, quite unknown, was presented to the Queen on her marriage: she was the daughter of a highly respectable and opulent merchant of Magdeburg. The Queen, ignorant of this circumstance, put to her the not unusual question in Germany, ‘Of what family are you?’ Timid and confused, in a brilliant circle, to which she was quite unaccustomed, the poor lady lost her self-possession, and answered in a faltering voice, ‘Ah, your Majesty, I am of no family!’ A smile of derision from the courtly ladies did not escape the observation of their mistress, and she resolved to teach the fair dames a lesson. Raising her beautiful head, as she was in the habit of doing when excited, her emotion visible in her speaking features, she said in tones audible throughout the whole Court, ‘Ah, madame, you have answered me with a gentle sarcasm. It is indeed of great importance to be able to count among our ancestors those who have distinguished themselves by virtue and merit, and all will agree that such a privilege

should be highly prized: but this, thank God, is not confined to any condition of men, but is found in all; the lowlier classes having produced some of the greatest benefactors to their kind. I thank you, madame, for having given me this opportunity of expressing my feelings on this not insignificant subject.' As she spoke, the Queen moved the little fan she generally carried in her hand, and which she used to move to and fro in accordance with her thoughts and feelings, with greater vivacity than usual. It is added that the little fan had a magical effect when the signal for dismissal was given by its owner, with a significant sign to the assembled ladies of Magdeburg."

We have spoken of there being "no equality," either in earthly or in eternal life. But there are intermediate occurrences in which there is, and there will be perfect equality. "One event happeneth unto all." "All go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." (Eccles. iii. 20.) It matters nothing whether it rests under a proud mausoleum or in a pauper's grave.

"Earth buildeth on the hill
Palaces and towers ;
Earth sayeth to the earth,
'All shall be our's ;'

Earth walketh on the earth,
Glittering like gold ;
Earth goeth to the earth
Sooner than it wold."

A lady,* described by her biographer as a true Christian gentlewoman," went to visit an old woman in a cottage full of smoke. "Eh, my leddy, ye canna come in here for the reek: siccan a fine leddy as you." "Hold your peace, Nelly," was the quaint reply. "When you and I are in the grave, if anybody takes up your dust in one hand, and mine in the other, he wont be able to say which was the leddy." But there is equality not only in the grave, but in the judgment. Even these human words are solemn,—

"It was a congregation vast of men,—
Of unappendaged and unvarnished men,
Of plain unceremonious human beings,
Of all but moral character bereaved." †

How much more so the words of Scripture: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God and the dead were judged"—not for their gifts, but for their use—"according to their WORKS."

Inequality, as the valuable gift of God, has been the thought I have desired to dwell upon. But like all other good gifts, if abused it is taken from

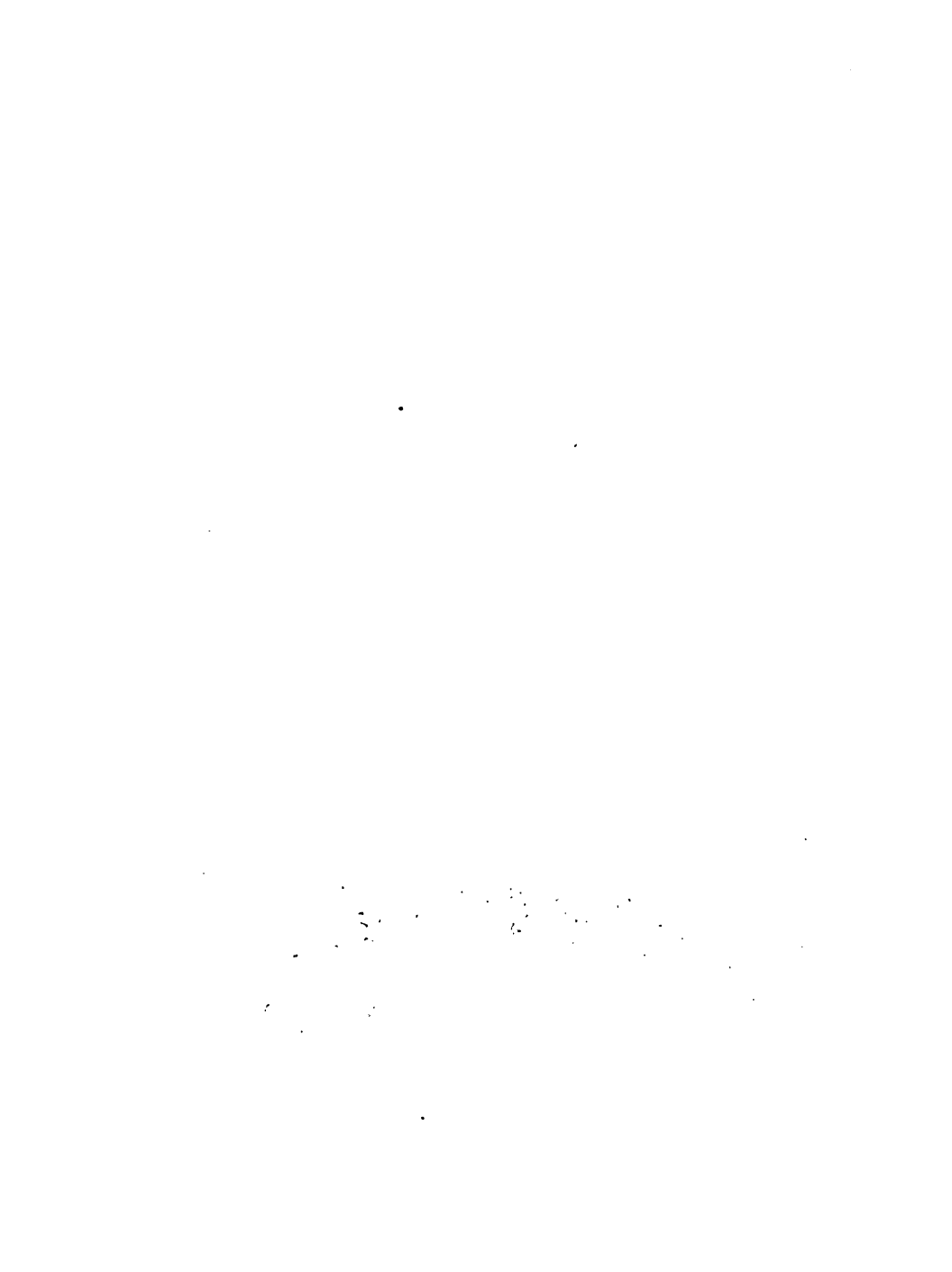
* "Life of Lady Colquhoun."

† Pollock.

us (Matt. xxv. 29, 30) : and while we see differing glories and unequal measures in the joys and capacities of a happy immortality, we may gather reverently, yet heedfully, intimations that an un-blessed equality will be the provision of the unre-deemed futurity,—the same casting out, the same bringing down. Lucifer, son of the morning, who with his pride of ascendancy (invariable consequence) “didst weaken the nations,” must become weak as others, and undergo the same servitude and the same humiliating punishments. (Comp. Is. xiv. 9—20 ; Luke xii. 46—48.) I will conclude with the following striking quotation from the same poet with whose words I began :—

“ I passed where two were standing side by side,—
A princess, who had floated on through life
Wrapt in the perfumed incense cloud of praise,
And a poor beggar’s fallen child. They both
Had lived the living death of godless mirth ;
Though variously, in marble palaces
And wretched hovels, mattered little here :
One hour had made them comrades ; one despair
Was written on their face.”

E. BICKERSTETH.



XI.

Much or Little.

Made for Thyself, O God !
Made for Thy love, Thy service, Thy delight ;
Made to show forth Thy wisdom, grace, and might ;
Made for Thy praise, whom veiled archangels laud ;
Oh strange and glorious thought, that we may be
A joy to Thee !

Yet the heart turns away
From this grand destiny of bliss, and deems
'Twas made for its poor self,—for passing dreams,
Chasing illusions melting day by day ;
Till *for ourselves* we read on this world's best—
“ This is not rest ! ”

.
O rest, so true, so sweet !
(Would it were shared by all the weary world !)
'Neath shadowing banner of His love unfurled,
We bend to kiss the Master's pierced feet,
Then lean our love upon His loving breast
And know God's rest.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

Much or Little.

"Lovest thou ME more than these."—JOHN xxi. 15.

"She loved MUCH : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth
LITTLE."—LUKE vii. 47.

IF one star differeth from another star in glory,
so does one heart differ from another heart in
loving, in degrees of loving, and in the objects
of its love. We can see this in some measure in
the history of our own and of kindred hearts, even
with regard to the affections of earth. We can
also look into the history both of the dead and the
living Church, and see some and hear of others of
whom no revelation from heaven could make it
clearer to us that they *do* love their Lord "more
than these." While in the Word itself we find the
plainest declaration that some love Jesus much
and some love Him little. We must combine with
this thought the solemn words of the only New
Testament curse : "If any man love not the Lord
Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha."

(1 Cor. xvi. 22.) It is therefore of the very greatest consequence in soul-history that no mistake should be made on this important point; that the "little love" should not become so diminished and attenuated that it might one day, to the dismay of its possessor, be found to have been in its very constitution "the baseless fabric of a vision." Or supposing that still, however small, it had the right stuff in it, and that at the great day it will be found alive, but crushed, wounded, and almost expiring under the weight of much-loved wood, hay, and stubble, which has to be burned up from around it. (1 Cor. iii. 12—15.) Ah: shall we not then long that we had had the "much love" of the few, instead of the "little love" of the many! Nor is this all: those who have "little," have not, and never can have the same happiness as those who have "much" of this joy-giving possession. If this be true in all the relations of home life, it is much more true in Christian life. Nay, those who love Christ a little are generally much more unhappy than those who do not love Him at all: it is true that they may escape the Anathema Maranatha, but they cannot escape the suffering, almost amounting to a curse, of a divided affection. They do not love God enough to be happy IN Him and in HIM alone, but they love Him enough to make

them dissatisfied with the other love in their hearts. What is this other love? It is the love of God's declared enemy. No wonder that the poor soul is rent and unhappy with the direct disobedience, and with the unhallowed antagonism. "Love not the world" is God's command (1 John ii. 15, 16); and we may be sure that there must be some good reason for a command of "Love not," from the God who IS love. Here is the reason; nothing can be clearer: "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God." (James iv. 4.) And when we virtually say, or allow the world to say, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people," then God's question and message comes clear and distinct as of old: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." (2 Chron. xix. 2.) But what does this command, not to love the world, really mean? is often asked, and I have heard some say that if it means anything practically, it must mean not to love God's creation,—beautiful scenery, forests, birds, and flowers,—for these, such say, are the things in the world. They are not, however, antagonistic to God; on the contrary, He is their Master, and they are all obedient to His laws: moreover, they are "precious" to Him, and so therefore may they be to us. (See

Deut. xxxiii. 13—16.) The world, and the “men of the world” (Ps. xvii. 14) to be shunned, however, must have this element of being not only “against” God, but servants of another God,—the “god of this world.” (2 Cor. iv. 4.) There is, however, another touching claim brought forward by John,—the counter claim of affection. “If any man love the world, the love of the FATHER is not in Him. FOR,” and it appeals more to the heart than the antagonistic element, “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the FATHER.” Nothing can give such practical lessons, or such clear definitions as God’s Word in its various aspects, so that no honest mind need be at a loss on this point.

Even to honestly inquiring minds, however, the question often does arise, “Is this or that wrong?” “Does this employment, or that amusement, belong to the god of this world (often clothed as an angel of light), or to the one living and true God?” But it too often happens that such inquiries, honest as they may be, are made without the real determination of getting the answer from God Himself. So that after being driven by the wind and tossed from one Christian friend, book, or sermon, to another, such inquirers often settle down in the de-

batable ground,—a very uncomfortable dwelling-place,—and try to serve God as tepid Christians, “neither hot nor cold,” as best they can. (Rev. iii. 15, 16.)

Here is a striking testimony of this divided state from Madame de Sevigné, who wrote thus: “One does not belong to the devil, because one fears God, and has at bottom a principle of religion; but then, on the other hand, one does not belong to God, because His laws appear hard, and self-denial is not pleasant. Hence the great number of the lukewarm, which does not surprise me at all. I enter perfectly into their reasons; only God you know hates them, and that you know ‘must not be.’” The habit of such a life grows strong, and in no class do we find the Word more thickly encrusted with self-interpretations, so that they lose sight entirely of God’s negatives (Matt. vi. 24; Gal. i. 10), which are yet as strong as God’s commands.

Such minds generally have the greatest respect for God and for His people, their only criticism generally being of the latter, that they are “too good!” Oh, what terrible words these will be to recall in the presence of Him, the alone Good, and to whom the goodness of the greatest saint in the earth cannot extend. (Ps. xvi. 2.) “Too good!” would that such words were abolished in this world

for evermore, as words that cannot stand for a moment the test of eternity. Another favourite expression is this, "Good people go too far;" and these words, "too far," may be called the motto or device of the God of this world. He spoke of old by the lips of Pharaoh, "I will let you go: only ye shall not go very far away" (Ex. viii. 28); a "divided heart" is, not "faulty" (Hos. x. 2) in *his* sight. He rather likes than otherwise "ambidexters in religion," as an old writer puts it, "who act like Redinald the Saxon, when he made two altars in his church,—one to God and another to the devil." His ends are well furthered either when the Church "bind themselves with the badge of Baal" (the true rendering of Num. xxv. 3, each idol having its own badge), or when the world adorns itself with the outer trappings of the Church. His great aim is to keep people in this half-way house, and his great means of doing so, is by keeping out "much love," and by gradually freezing, stifling, or crushing, as the case may be, the "little love."

Among the many benefits of "much love" the particular one I want to point out to you just now is that it quite changes the ground, so to speak, of the widely-felt difficulty of how far, or how near, we can safely go in worldly conformity. Much love even to an earthly friend indeed produces the

desire to err on the safe side, and makes us more anxious to see how much one can please, instead of how far one can go without offending. So with a heart full of love to Jesus, and completely consecrated to His service, the question is, How NEAR can I keep to Him? How BEST can I please Him? How and where can I do MOST work for Him? And in most of the different cases of difficulty His Divine LOVE will be found to afford the only competent help and answer,—sought for from Himself, and not from earthly friend or counsellor.

We find the questioners generally divided into four classes.

I. Those who honestly say they *like* to go to worldly amusements, but who ask where is the harm of them? It is the *liking* which is the harm in such a case, for “if any man *love* the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Get in THE love therefore, and the difficulty will vanish, or assume a very different aspect. Dr. John Hall is said to have answered the question, “Is it right to dance?” in this pithy manner: “If you are truly converted to God, you do not wish to dance; and if you are not, it is high time you were.” *

* Quoted in *Family Treasury*.

II. But there are those, especially among "chief women," who say they love God, and do not care for the amusements of the world, but oddly enough, think that they must partake of them "as a duty to society." Then, surely, the country-town Assembly, or the London Operas, balls, etc., must have in them some service for souls, some communion of saints, some work for the true God, and against the false God,—or where is the duty? Nothing can be duty for society which is not at the same time duty to God. If this is not the case, either the position is false, or the Word of God, with its "cannots," and its definitions of our social duties, and its plain declarations as to the "Prince of this world," must be false. Which is it to be? It is an ordinary accusation against those who are said to "go too far," that they "set themselves up as better than their neighbours;" but it seems to me to be the very reverse. Those who profess to love God, and yet to be able to go freely among the many Gallios who care for none of these things—to mingle in the song, and the dance, and the hurrying music, and the flashing lights, of scenes, where God is "not in all their thoughts" (Ps. x. 4, a strange, arithmetical question it would be,—in *how many* thoughts He is dwelling in a ball-room!)—must possess powers of concen-

tration, of abstraction, of bravery, and a depth of inner, undisturbable peace and love, far above what is attained to by their weaker neighbours who fear to lose what they already have.

III. A large proportion of Christian "chief women," who join in worldly amusements, may be found among those who do honestly mourn over their own position, but who think it their duty to go as chaperons to their daughters. Over and over again I have heard such say, "I *must* go, though I hate and abjure these amusements; but my daughters will have them, and I dare not let them go alone." Such an argument, if founded on fact, would seem to be the fullest and most pointed commentary we could have on the truth of God's Word,—that Satan is the prince of the world,—lord and guide therefore of its society and its amusements. How far from "innocent" must those amusements be to which the modest, well-brought-up daughters of our "chief women" cannot be allowed to repair, even with other respectable female friends, unless under the protection of their mothers?—and how doubly sad and false the position of such mothers, when they allowed their daughters' feet to be carefully trained for amusements, of which they not only must have foreseen the religious, but

even the social danger! Oh, Christian mothers, who earnestly desire to walk after God's ways yourselves, and to keep your daughters out of temptations, keep them out of that preparative hot-bed of worldliness, the dancing-school! *Then*, with a safer conscience, you can calmly and tenderly lay before them your views and wishes, when they are old enough to take on themselves the responsibility,—not attempting to coerce them on the one side, nor giving in an iota of your own principle on the other. Surely society is not yet so *very* bad, that Christian mothers might not safely confide their daughters, if they *will* go, into the keeping of a respectable chaperon. I believe that in most cases they will not *long* continue to go, but will gladly return to the praying, home-staying mothers, who have been true to the principles of their "first love."

IV. There *is* a class whose position is so difficult that no advice can be given, except to take all the closer refuge in the wisdom of THE Counsellor: I mean those who are positively commanded to go into worldly society by parents and husbands. In many cases, I believe, this difficulty is exaggerated; and that if the subject, as a matter of conscience, were bravely, yet tenderly, laid before the objectors,

with all endeavours to please in everything that did not touch the conscience, the opposition would be withdrawn. Where this is not the case, however, I have known many instances of prayer for guidance step by step being directly answered ; so that when the dreaded occasion came, the Lord had made a way of escape : or that going once, calm, serious, and under protest, the pressure has never been repeated. Where occasions arise in which for a time obedience seems His will, it is of the utmost consequence that it should be made clear that those who thus obey are doing it for Him, and that they do not allow themselves to be entrapped into "loving" that of which the Lord has said, "Love not."

It is remarkable how well the world itself knows how to estimate the half or whole following of the Lord. The following story is told of Madame de Staël, when present at an evening party at Lausanne, which had ended in dancing : "While she stood gazing upon the dancers, her brow became thoughtful, as her eyes were fixed upon one of them—a tall, slight young man. There was always a charm for her in the character of one so true and genuine as Charles Scholl ; and the change produced by the exciting amusement of the present moment in his usually grave and thoughtful countenance, had

perplexed her. He was a student preparing for the sacred ministry of the Church. When he had led his fair partner to her seat, he passed near Madame de Staël. 'Charles,' she said, in a low, but distinct voice, 'vous ne ferez pas un bon ministre ; vous vivez trop dans le temps. Le ministre de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ doit vivre hors du temps.' She said no more, but turned away. The young student stopped : those few quiet words had startled him, spoken as they were by a woman of the world, to him a student for the ministry of the Gospel. Her voice was gentle, her manners kind ; but he felt that the words were a grave remonstrance,—a rebuke. There was indeed a simple grandeur in the remark, which in another form might have been common-place. These few simple words sank into his heart, and made a deep impression there : he never forgot them. They proved, by the grace of God, words of vital power, bringing their influence to bear upon the whole course of his future life. I heard them from his own lips when he had become my most intimate friend." *

And to us equally would such an admonition

* The Rev. C. B. Tayler, in *Sunday at Home*. 1870.

apply ; for if we are Christians at all, we too are "priests" (1 Pet. ii. 5), and need to live "hors du temps." I have heard that in that often-quoted passage, "using the world, and not abusing it" (1 Cor. vii. 31), there is almost an untranslatable shade of meaning in the word "abuse," having the thought of going downwards,—whereas the world must be used as still mounting up and out of it. "Much love" is what teaches us that difficult lesson ; "much love" keeps us from loving that which God loves not at all ; "much love" will also make us faithful witnesses of Him who first loved us ; while "little love" keeps us silent, keeps us cold, keeps us distant. Little love there truly must have been among the "chief men" and "chief women" in London some years ago, when messengers were sent from a far country to see what sort of a God the English had ! The Queen of Madagascar, before the celebrated persecution of the Christians in her dominions, heard that the Missionaries preached about the "Lord Jesus Christ" as the Son of God. Others, however, reported that He was only an obscure ancestor of the English. If this were the case, the Queen argued that there was no reason why the Malagasy should worship Him, although a few English people might do so if they liked. Before deciding, how-

ever, on putting down the new worship, the Queen determined to make some attempt to find out whether Jesus really was the Son of God or not. She accordingly directed her ambassadors, on their visit to England, to keep their eyes and ears well open on this point. When they returned, they reported that Jesus Christ could not be the Son of God; for the "great people" in London never spoke of Him, and were occupied with dinners, balls, plays, and such like, and that it was only the "poor people" who seemed to know anything about Him. Soon after commenced the wholesale martyrdoms of the Madagascar Christians!

"Not many mighty, not many noble," truly; but let us thank God for the letter "M," with Lady Huntingdon, and let this be the experience and practice of the few: "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. ix. 24.) SUCH love indeed requires "MUCH love" again. (1 John iii. 1—18.)

It must not be forgotten, that like all of good and evil, there is a CHOICE of much love or little: it is a blessing which "all may have if they dare

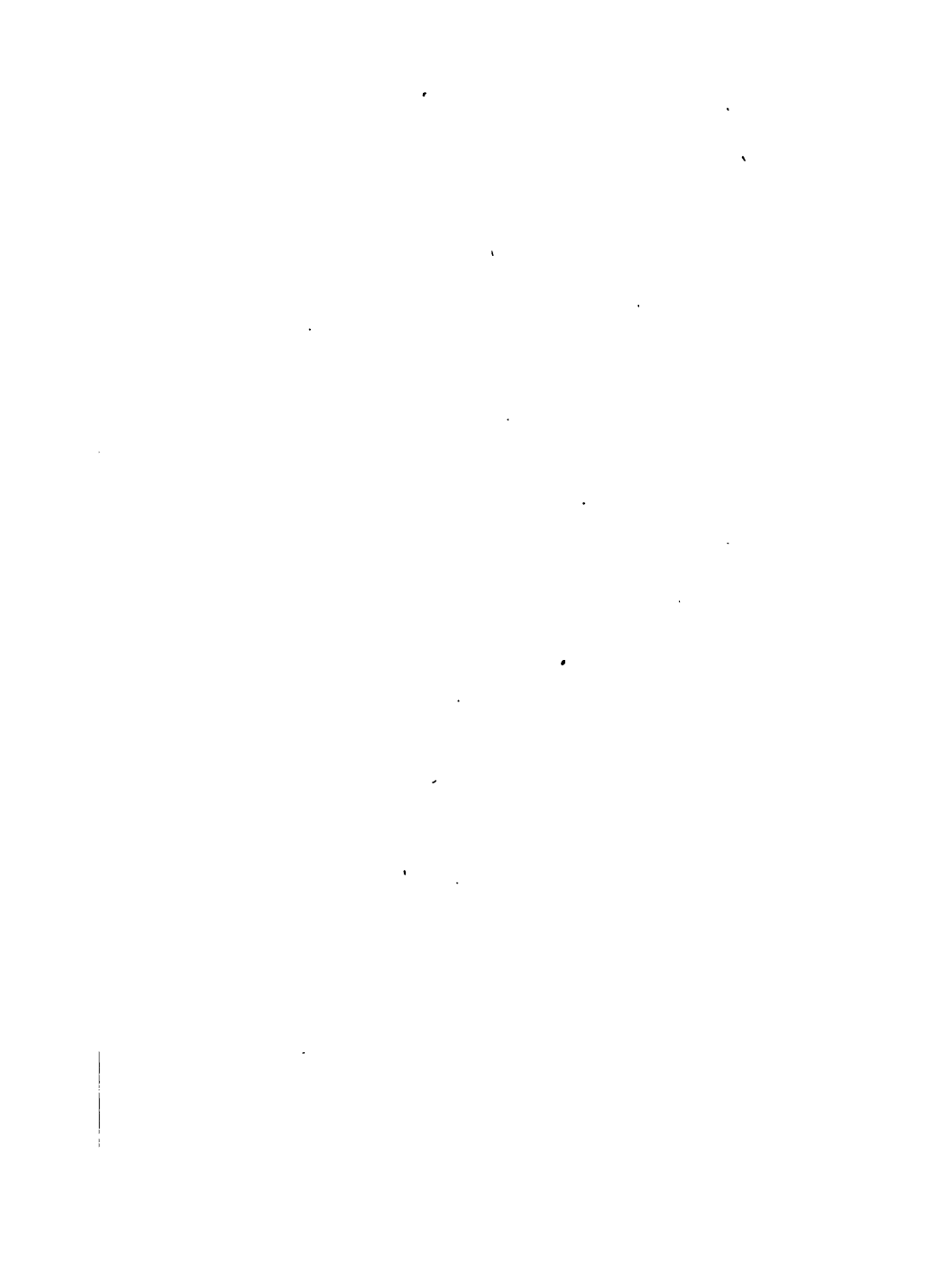
choose." Caleb and Joshua *need not* have been the only two among the hosts of Israel who followed God "wholly ;" but it needs determination,—it needs a strong purpose to be first formed and then "fulfilled" (Num. xxxii. 11, marg.) There must be a following ON (Hos. vi. 3), a following HARD (Ps. lxiii. 8),—so hard and so earnest that the little gibes and jeers and biting accusations may safely and joyfully be left far behind as harmless nothings. I remember as a child being deeply touched by hearing my father tell, with tears in his eyes, a little incident of a young "chief woman," whose married name is still well known among the upper ten thousand. At a gay party, the subject of conversation was the peculiarities of some Christian people, upon which much ridicule was expended. This young lady was the only one who spoke in their defence, on which it was observed in a mocking tone, "Oh, so *you* are one of the saints, too!" on which, with an indescribable mixture of modesty and bravery, which, though not himself a Christian at the time, struck a chord in my father's heart, she meekly replied, "No: but I am trying to be."

The time of choice does not last for ever, and it is possible that from some that which they have may be taken away, and the choice turn

out even worse than that of "little" instead of
"much."

"She has chosen the world
And its paltry crowd,
She has chosen the world
And an endless shroud ;
She has chosen the world
With its misnamed pleasures,
She has chosen the world
Before heaven's own treasures.
She has launched her boat
On life's giddy sea,
And her all is afloat
For eternity ;
But Bethlehem's star
Is not in her view,
And her aim is far
From the harbour true."

McCHEYNE.



XII.

God's Dyke.

“ Beam on us brightly, sacred day !
Dawn softly, for our Saviour's sake,
And waft thy sweetness on our way,
To draw us heavenward when we wake.
Oh, holy life, that shall not end,
Light that will never cease to be ;
May every Sabbath-day we spend
Add to our happiness in thee.”


A. L. WARING.

God's Dyke.

"Upon all the glory shall be a defence."—Is. iv. 5.

"I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them."—
EZEK. xx. 12.

"The Sabbath a delight."—Is. lviii. 13.

"OD'S Dyke!" What a suggestive name for the Sabbath, which we owe to that noble country of Holland, which after being a land of saints and martyrs in the olden time, could practically declare that "righteousness *does* exalt a nation," and that "wisdom and knowledge *are* the stability of her times!" Even as her broad sea-walls or dykes defend the crops and the meadows, the villages and the cities, from the inundating waters, so did the fine old Dutchmen consider that the Sabbath was a defence provided by God against the flood of worldliness and infidelity. And so it has been in our own beloved England. But, alas, there are breaches here and there in the Sabbatic dyke which seem to account sadly for overflowings of world-

liness and immorality! I am not going to enter on any Sabbatarian controversy, and I use the word not with any Judaic significance, but in its literal meaning: the "keeping a rest."

Rest and defence! Scarcely synonymous terms! Yet in its national character, broad and quiet as the Dutch walls, the Sabbath still lies in the sunshine, presenting its steady front to the encroaching foe, while behind it may rest securely, family by family, individual by individual, those who desire to rest from, and thus prepare for the work and the warfare of the week. The Sabbath rest, however, in its personal aspect, has also in it a more active principle of resistance than the defensive national bulwark. I have already quoted a definition of worldliness as "that which is antagonistic to God," and we have several times considered together the great opposing and dragging-down forces of vanity and falsehood, which form, as it were, the atmosphere of what is called "the world." Now in the Sabbath rest there is something more than the rest of sleep or inaction: it has in it spiritual progress,—opposition to worldliness,—opportunities of flight upward and onward. And may we not learn a lesson from the laws of a bird's flight towards *its* skies and *its* glad heaven? One great motive-power of flight comes from its very difficulty,

for a bird is heavier than the air, but it succeeds in its heavenward flight by possession of a force which supplies *momentum* capable of resisting all lesser forces, whether the downward tendency of gravitation, the ordinary resistance of the air, or special heavy gales.* If, however, it were to let the inner force go to sleep, and follow instead of resisting the downward course or the surrounding currents, why then it would cease to be an intelligent bird following the laws of its Creator; and comporting itself like a grain of dust, it would go down, down, with its self-chosen companion.

In the great question of how far should we go? How much or how little should we be conformed to the world or to God? we are too apt to forget the great provision produced by an inner Divine Power,—not our own,—against forces which impel downwards or winds which blow sideways, but which need resistance in order that we should, notwithstanding,—nay, even by their aid,—mount upwards. Of course this resistance must^t be ever recurring to be successful. However, in looking at religion and social life, especially in our gay teeming cities, one cannot but be struck by the immense importance of one day in seven kept as a time

* See the "Reign of Law," by the Duke of Argyll.

of special heavenward progress. I am not speaking just now of that absolute rest from hard labour which working men, and even working machines, so specially need; those additional hours of sleep, that family rest, that quiet gathering of scattered home members, which make, or ought to make it, the workman's blessing, the poor man's day; but I refer to those of the upper classes,—“chief women” especially,—whose week is only a week of hard labour by reason of the yielding to every wind that blows and every current that draws them hither and thither in the restless pursuit of pleasure and fashion.

Or perhaps I ought to speak more specially to those who do profess their aim to be upwards, yet who from the circumstances of their lives are much hurried and distracted by worldly temptations, company, and modes of living. What a help and momentum in the right direction they would find a steady Sabbath-day's resistance of the antagonistic influences by which they are surrounded! A fashionable London Sunday yielded to, is indeed enough to account for much sorrowful uncertain walk and retrograde movement during the rest of the week. Its concomitants, even among those who eschew positive gaiety on a Sunday, seem to be an opera-like crush to hear some favourite preacher, whether it be

orthodox sermons in orthodox churches, dry and well-preserved, perfect in form and structure as fossil fern or fish,—or full of intellect and energy, though preached under the upas shadows of Romanizing ceremonies or Broad Church deficiencies. Then the Park, the Zoological Gardens, or so-called sacred music in some theatrical building, and perhaps a “quiet evening” and “good book” held in the hand and looked at in the intervals of frivolous conversation, whilst all the time the excitement is so much less than on other days, that “When will the Sabbath be gone?” is as much the heart question of the “chief women” as of the farmers and merchants of old. (Amos viii. 5.)

“Oh, my wasted Sabbaths!” men and women on their death-beds have been known to say, in bitterness of spirit; while, on the contrary, the testimony of one great intellect was, “I feel as if God had by giving the Sabbath, given fifty-two springs in the year!”* and of another: “A Sunday given to the soul is the best of all means of refreshment even to the intellect.”† What a day indeed it is for the true study of the Word of God, which either by hearing or reading is sufficient to open treasures of wisdom to *any* intellect!

* S. T. Coleridge.

† Isaac Taylor.

Faith cometh by hearing. So the services of the sanctuary ought indeed to be to our souls, not as the sound of a very lovely song on a well-played instrument (Ezek. xxxiii. 32), nor as satisfying ears of curiosity and craving for excitement, but as messages from God to us,—of rebuke for sin,—of pleading for holiness,—of direction where and how to find a whole salvation. Nothing is stranger, however, than the way in which really faithful preaching, if it is what is called popular, is complacently listened to with small thought or result. It would seem as if each hard message must be as a bombshell falling into each fashionable pew; yet hearers smile complacently, praise abundantly, and go their way as before. Is this not because so few realize that the speaker is but there as an ambassador, and that in reality the risen Lord is still through His servant ministering to us in holy things? (Heb. viii. 1, 2, marg.)

I remember reading of the astonishment and commotion produced among some African negroes by their first sight of a looking-glass presented to them by a traveller. They shrieked, danced, gesticulated, and could not keep away from the mysterious surface. Some ran away from themselves in terror; some thought themselves very pretty; and one man was in ecstasies of delight because "he so

ugly!" There is a looking-glass of which many amongst us are in equal ignorance with the savages, and that is the Word of God; and, sadder still, many see this mirror, look into it, behold themselves, and, unlike the poor African, go their way unconcerned, and straightway forget what manner of people they are. Read James i. 23, 24, where we find this description applied to those who are hearers of the Word and not doers. To a thoughtful observer it is a very strange sight to see, as we often see in Scotland, the little churches among the mountains, or the fir woods, or up on a birchy knoll, or away down in moorland hamlets, or the large churches of our lowland towns, well filled Sunday after Sunday, where the evils of SIN and their REMEDY are faithfully preached, while the people listen approvingly. "That's a grand sermon;" or, "He's a fine preacher:" but it seems as if few thought *they* had to do with "sin;" or that it was their own familiar house-dweller. It is quite the same thing, however, among the upper classes, only more mysterious, for *they* have been educated to put "two and two together," or in less homely language, to trace out cause and effect. Then in England, even independent of the preacher, there are looking-glasses hung up on the walls of the beautiful churches, — the Ten Commandments!

Neither blind nor short-sighted eyes avail to hide this looking-glass; for Sunday after Sunday are read and repeated the startling words, with the addition, "Lord incline our hearts to keep this law," and "Have mercy upon us miserable sinners."

What, then, are we only sinners at church? or is it only if we steal, murder, or commit adultery, that we are telling the truth when we make that confession? How is it that we can go back to our homes as comfortable and self-complacent as before, and begin a new week of bad temper, selfishness, evil speaking, wastefulness, and worldliness, as if we had not known and seen and spoken those solemn words? Just because our glance into the looking-glass has been so imperfect that we have straightway gone away and forgotten our own likeness, and the likeness of our living Lord. (See 2 Cor. iii. 18.)

We have a sure test whether our hearing has or has not been of "faith." If the blessing of the Holy Spirit, in conviction of sin, follows the application of the Word of God, then the next question is, "What shall we do" with this ugly mass of household, family, neighbourly heart-sins and "faults"? An English clergyman, a dear friend of mine, answered to such an inquiry, "I will show you what to do with your sins." He took his little Bible out of

his pocket and read, "The Lord hath laid ON HIM the iniquity of us all." (Is. liii. 6.) "That's it!" said the inquiring soul. "I see it now! I know where to put *my* sins!" and from that time he rejoiced in the Lord.

But it is not only in public services that the Scriptures are to be specially honoured on the rest-day of God. It is a blessed opportunity of studying that wonderful Book, and of growing to delight in it, like King David,—a practical and intellectual delight, for "the entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple:" and again, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path:" and again, "Order my steps in Thy Word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." Oh, if we were only to make the most of our Sunday leisure, to pray over the precious words of God, to turn them into nourishment in our daily weakness, and weapons against our daily sins, and instruments for our daily work, and balm for our daily sorrows, and food for our hungry intellects,—how far on we should be in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus! how much "more noble" than our present selves! (Read Acts xvii. 11.)

The Sabbath is revealed to us as something more than even a defence, or a rest; it is emphatically a

"sign:" a sign between God and us. A sign of rest (Gen. ii. 2, 3), it must necessarily also be a sign of work. In earliest times it told of God the King as God the Worker, and each recurring period of rest tells us that we too are expected to be workers, His busy servants, and needing therefore a rest. But it is also a sign of power,—God's power, which worked for us light and life and order and reason. And a sign of consecration: God sanctified the day for a sanctified people (Ex. xxxi. 13), and each set-apart portion of time is a sign of God's will that we, too, should be sanctified ones, cleansed and set apart for Him. A sign, too, of God's complacency: He saw on that wonderful Saturday eve, whether of week, century, or millennium, that the work of His hands "was very good;" while long afterwards, it was sung in heaven, that "for His pleasure all things were and are created" (Rev. v. 11.) It is significant that in reference to the Sabbath, God uses for us the word which most strongly signifies complacency. He particularly speaks of His own day as something in which we may take "delight." (Is. lviii. 13, 14.) If therefore our thoughts were more as the Lord's thoughts in this matter, we might have at least one delightful day in seven. A popular writer has spoken of the "duty of delight." At all

events it is clear from the Bible that Sabbath delight *is* a duty as well as a privilege. But, ah, how little even Christians experience of this happy feeling! How apt we are to tire of Sunday; to make it a wearisome day to our children, and often to think ourselves warranted to "clip it short at both ends!" Difficult as it undoubtedly is, it is a help to strive after the greater rather than the less; it is easier to "delight" in the Sabbath than simply to "keep" it without enjoying it, which is a hard bondage.

There is something very significant to my mind in Isaiah's words, "if they *call* the Sabbath a delight." If we speak of Sunday being a happy day to our children, we shall have gone a certain way in making them believe and expect that it at least may be so; and if we habituate ourselves to the thought, we shall have gone a certain way in preparing to be happy, and to make others happy in it; though we cannot be successful without real asking and receiving help from Him who made the Sabbath for man and his actual needs and wants,—help too for all the particulars of the day. Where there is musical taste and musical voices in a family, the singing hymns to, or with the children, is a most important Sunday element. But this employment is of course entirely dependent on circumstances. Where music does not come natu-

rally, our endeavours should still be after as much *beauty* as possible. Some find it exceedingly useful to make flowers a special Sunday "delight." To those who have gardens and conservatories, a Sunday walk round them with the children, pointing out the progress, changes, and uses of flowers, trees, grass, and vegetables, recalling those mentioned in Scripture, and looking from "nature up to nature's God," is a happy and profitable occupation. If some way from church, the walk thither across the fields may be turned to the same good account: the observation of wild flower, hedge-row, distant landscape, crystals of ice, and morsels of snow, may all suggest some pleasant Scripture and Sabbath thought. "This is difficult," you say. True: but it only needs Bible EDUCATION; for remember that to spend Sunday happily, we need first to educate ourselves, and then our children, to do so; an education more truly valuable than the usual idea of "Sunday lessons," although these of course must not be left undone.

"Sabbath talks" form a very valuable part of a home Sabbath. According as they are able, let either father or mother arrange to have a short confidential talk with each child: let it be *their* time for speaking; encourage perfect unreserve about their faults, their struggles, their temptations, their

wishes, their plans; and be sure that they get back at least sympathy, counsel, and prayer. One thing belonging to the Jewish keeping of the Sabbath would be very useful now for the heads of families. It was the custom to have every week a day of "preparation,—that is, the day before the Sabbath." (Mark xv. 42.) Why should not Saturday night still be considered as something of a "preparation-eve," as the time for preparing spices (Luke xxiii. 54—56, xxiv. 1) to be used on the sweet and happy day of rest? Husband and wife might hold precious preparative communion together. There might be a consultation as to what could be "laid by" for the first day of the week,—what acts of neighbourly kindness could be performed,—what worldliness to be met and resisted,—what faults in themselves and their children to be specially confessed and pardoned,—what new work to be attempted for Jesus,—what pleasant occupation wherewith to vary the morrow! And surely a special time of prayer might well be given for those who minister *before*, if not always, to young children in the sanctuary, that where the Gospel is preached the little ones may be as well taught and remembered as under the Law. (Ps. lxxviii. 4—8; Ex. xiii. 8, 14—16.)

In these days of so-called "breadth" of opinion, one can rarely use the word "Sabbath" without

being accused of being a "Jew," or at all events a narrow *un-*"kindly Scot." But joyfully I turn to the unimpeachable name revealed to us in the later Scriptures—the "Lord's day,"—the meaning of which is perhaps fuller and more genial, but not less binding. Very similar, too, for is it not also a sign between God and us? Is it not also a sign of the same events and privileges,—rest, work, power, consecration, and complacency? But is it not, above all, and girdling all, a sign of RESURRECTION power? "The Lord's day," the day on which He rose again, is "an Easter-day in every week," a joyful sign of a two-fold power; one our's to-day, belonging to us if we "believe:" the same amount of successful power which it took to raise the dead body of Christ,—ready to raise our souls from dead works, from dead flesh, from dead self, into "newness of life" (comp. Rom. vi. 11—13, with that wonderful passage in Eph. i. 18—20): "that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." This doctrine of Christ's practical resurrection power in believers is certainly not among the things "not generally known," for it is taught in all Evangelical churches; but it has come

to rank among those things so long theoretically known, that they are apt to lose life and power and spirit : a good subject therefore to meditate on in the leisure of His commemorative day. A sign of a coming Resurrection Power, also, which we certainly do all believe in, yet fall far short of its sweetness and its comfort,—that power which shall raise up and change and glorify these poor frail bodies of our own and of our beloved ones, whether already gone or yet to go. It is therefore another good Lord's day occupation to meditate and realize the coming work

“Of Him whose touch was health, whose single word
Electrified with life the palsied arm ;
Of Him who said, ‘Take up thy bed and walk ;’
Of Him who cried to Lazarus, ‘Come forth ;’
And He who cried to Lazarus, ‘Come forth,’
Will, when the Sabbath of the tomb is past,
Call forth the dead and re-unite the dust,
Transformed and purified, to angel souls.
How grateful ’tis to recollect the time
When hope arose to faith ! Faintly at first
The heavenly voice is heard ; then by degrees
The music sounds perpetual in the heart.”*

One other likeness in sign let me merely allude to,—that of the Lord's proprietorship. In the Old Testament the day of rest is called the Sabbath of the Lord (Ex. xx. 10), “MY Sabbath ;” and the

* Graham's Sabbath.

blessing of delight is promised to those who do His ways and not "their own ways, not finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words." In the New Testament the day is also emphatically called "the Lord's." Let us not then "rob God" of this good possession, suited exactly to the physical and mental needs of man, lent or given to him to use and to delight in, but for which he is responsible to the Giver and Possessor.

Oh, "chief women," use well, love well, delight much in your fifty-two yearly gifts, and you will wonder at the power and the progress and the successful resistance that will mark the remaining three hundred and thirteen days. I find some observations of the celebrated Philip Henry, with which I will conclude. He used to call the Lord's day the "Queen of days," the "pearl of the week," and observed it accordingly. His common salutation of his family and friends on the Lord's day in the morning, was that of the primitive Christians: "The Lord is risen: He is risen indeed!" making it his chief business on that day to celebrate the memory of Christ's resurrection; and he would say sometimes, "Every Lord's day is a true Christian's Easter day."

XIII.

Aesthetics.



“ But PAUSE, oh, Christians, and think awhile,
Ere ye give your gold to the sculptured aisle !
Must ye gild the Gospel's priceless wealth ?
Must ye rouge the hue of the Gospel's health ?
Must ye gem the scabbard of God's own sword ?
Must ye tinsel the casket which holds the Word ?
Must ye lend the aid of a foreign power,
To the message sent in the Spirit's hour ? ”

Aesthetics.

“God is a Spirit : and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”—JOHN iv. 24.

“Ye are God’s building” “the temple of the living God.”—
1 COR. iii. 9 ; 2 COR. vi. 16.

HOW beautiful is God’s architecture ! See the old stately mountains with their pines and heaths and cataracts ; see the forests with their heaven-pointing arches, and their columns bronzed and gnarled ; see the unpillared temple of the heavens with its bright trceries and delicate starry oriels,—lacking, it is true, the shaft and the frieze, the nave and the cloister, but more thrilling in its silent sublimity than the proudest of earthly fanes. How beautiful is God’s music ! The winds that sweep the chords of the forest branches, and the melody of the ocean ripples, and the plashing of the burn waters upon the white pebbles, and the voices of the mavis and the merle, are wafted symphonies from heaven’s music, tones from the

voice of God. How beautiful is God's painting! The purple of yon distant hill, the blue of the slumbering water, the vivid green and crimson and gold of the forest, the scarlet glory of the western clouds at evening, and the colours of the wild-flower petals, were never mixed upon the palette of a painter, and put to shame the flush and the glow of the canvas. So beautiful was nature that men were constrained to imitate; and not satisfied with her stateliness and her beauty, they reared the work of their hands unto the skies; they constructed the sackbut and the cymbal, and they stole the colours from the flower, the fish, and the mineral. So far it was right and wise: to imitate the very workmanship of God, to assimilate the thoughts and the acts of the creature to the thoughts and acts of the Creator, was no unworthy aim; and in some millennial period, the beautiful gifts given to man, of imitation and expression, may yet again return to the honour of the Giver, when they will but declare His glory and imitate His beauty. Our thoughts in the meantime, however, are turned, not to what may be in the future, but to what has been in the past and is in the present; and certainly it seems as if "Art" has never yet attained a right to the glorious prefix "Christian," and that, though subservient to the religion of sen-

timent, it has seldom furthered the Bible religion of the Cross.

Let us turn to ARCHITECTURE, which is more exclusively devoted to the outward seemings of religion than any other of the fine arts; and what do we find? See yonder noble edifice: how beautiful are its decorated spires, and fretted ornaments! How rich the glow of colouring that falls with the sunshine upon the marble floor! How the eye follows those lofty pillars shooting up into the arching roof! How costly are the carved screens and marble altars! Nor is there a crowd of kneelers awaiting to inhale the influences of that scene of beauty, whether for good or for evil. Gorgeous are the accompaniments: glittering and crimson robes, golden censers, and sweet savours, pompous crowns and crosses,—different, indeed, from the cross of wood and the crown of thorn. Now they are worshipping something not spiritual, not eternal, but the work of men's hands.* It is the host. It is baked bread, and fermented wine. It is an idol, that may interpose as effectually between the people and their God as the Baalim in the groves of Israel. Nor is it an idol which even promotes civilization. From one such gorgeous cathedral in beautiful Spain, not long ago, I was literally forced to take flight from the numbers of miserable, unrelieved,

and unrelievable specimens of the most frightful human destitution. Another, on whose steps but a year or two before a foul political murder had been committed, was the centre of what appeared to be an entire population of misery and crime.

Come yet again to a scene, similar, yet different. There is architectural beauty, chaste and solemn from its old grey tints and subdued glow; while instead of the dolls, and the lace, and the tinsel of foreign frippery, we have old knightly tombs, and resting-places of English Monarchs, and banners of English chivalry, and subterranean vaults, with massy pillars, and Saxon arches. There is no elevated idol, no enthusiasm even of error, no warmth even of form. This is not a temple for the "masses:" the poor turn away from its Gospel. It is true there are priests in stoles and surplices, and chanting choristers, and the same words hurried over twice seven times in seven days to a few careless and uninterested kneelers. But not in such scenes at least can we look for the so-called "utility of beauty:" idolatry in the one and deadness in the other.

I am aware that some minds are so constituted that they require the excitements of outward form and beauty, and that while honestly complaining of deadness and darkness in their own chambers

and accustomed sanctuaries, they enjoy a depth of feeling and a rapture of devotion amidst the resounding aisles of a cathedral; we have heard some confess this, whom we believe to be indeed the Lord's own people, but not therefore is it necessarily a right and healthy frame of mind. Rather would one affectionately urge upon such the necessity of self-examination, lest the old leaven of natural excitement and religious sentimentality should be existing under the guise of a highly-wrought and enthusiastic devotion. A zeal which felt itself more in the presence of God, when surrounded by carved wood and painted glass, than in the little Bethel of the solitary chamber, or in the homeliest temple, it may be feared has not yet fully grasped the spirituality and omnipresence of that God, who though the very heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet walked in humble tent and tabernacle in the days of old (2 Sam. vii. 5, 6), and whose chosen dwelling was with the lowly and contrite heart. (Is. lxvi. 1, 2; lvii. 15.) Honest minds aware of this æsthetic tendency, which is a gift of nature and not of grace, have confessed to feeling as emotionally moved in the Taj of Agra, with its idol-worship, as in any consecrated cathedral.

As to music, there are some hearts which do not thrill to the touch of melody; there seems to be

no voice in it for them,—no aperture by which it can enter within the spirit's veil; they know as little of the mysterious joy, the troubled delight which it brings to others, as the blind man knows of the green sunny woods, or the deaf of the blessedness of a beloved voice. Even such, however, unconsciously associate the idea of music with heaven. I remember once hearing a friend confess his want of all love for music, but add, "that is a joy which will be given to me in heaven!" What, then, must be the feelings of those to whom harmony brings a message, as it were, from another life, from an inner world! Were there no other proof of immortality, the voice of music would almost suffice, so vividly do its strains bring before us a higher existence, a coming beauty, an eternal majesty. It could not be expected that such a powerful engine for moving the hearts of men, should escape the watchfulness of him who walketh to and fro upon the earth, seeking for his prey. Accordingly, we find that music, although one of the voices of God upon the earth, has been pressed into the service of God's enemy, the world; and thus, in some measure stripped of its majesty and beauty, speaking with a fainter voice, and shining with a dimmer light. Still, though severed from its native element, music has power to charm and to excite, and we find it

successfully ministering to the amusement of the worldly, to the vanity and love of display of the vain, and to the sloth and self-indulgence of the sensual. We find the Scriptural words, and sublimest strains of Handel and Haydn, chanted by the irreligious and the depraved, amidst the frivolities of the concert or the oratorio; while even in the private circle, music is marred by its union to frivolous words, or unseemly movements, till the majesty of its author, and the high purposes of its nature, are forgotten and destroyed. On the other hand, we have music, like architecture, and especially when united to architecture, made a still more dangerous snare to highly-wrought and susceptible imaginations,—displaying the goodly blossom while it bears the bitter fruit,—disdaining the world's shell, while it possesses the world's kernel,—working upon the innate carnality, while it seems to rouse but the highest essence of spirituality,—ministering to the craving for excitement, to the love of all that is beautiful, save the beauty of holiness,—to the admiration of all that is externally religious, but which does not change the heart. In this state of false excitement, while there is much that seems pure and elevated, there is ever one element wanting,—the sober truth as it is in Jesus. The sensitive spirit, while wrapped in the glories of

music and architecture, finds it hard to descend to the quiet self-denial of besetting sin and daily fault ; to practical duties and active obedience ; and, above all, to the consciousness of sin and the need of a Saviour. And herein lies the danger. Many an enthusiastic temperament, exquisite in its sensibilities, and wearied with "the march of life," has been led away step by step, first to hear, then to admire, then to frequent the musical services in church and convent, till it was found asleep on the enchanted ground, and enveloped in the net of the fowler. Painful, likewise, is the fact, that the perfection of music, or rather the perfection of sound,—the voices and the anthems, which seem as the voices of angels and the anthems of heaven,—the requiems and *misereres*, which stir the very inmost being,—are to be found in the ritual of Popery and its allies.

Then there are the wonderful and mysterious subjects of painting and sculpture,—we say wonderful and mysterious, because in their closer imitation of God's works in nature, than any other branch of art, and in their wonderful powers of realization, we might have looked for some blessed results, some glory to God, some benefit to man ; but, alas, these beautiful gifts are far more vividly brought before our eyes in their abuse, than in their

use. In painting, to realize and reproduce living nature, to point the mind to Him who creates all beauty and all glory, to rejoice and elevate the heart and vision by looking upon loveliness ;—in sculpture to beautify the idea of death, to suggest a joyful wakening after the quiet slumber, and a new life beyond the white lovely marble,—would seem to be their legitimate aims. But when we find them, as amongst the mighty masters of palette and chisel, representing the painful and degrading scenes of mortal suffering, or it may be of mortal sin, ministering to the deception of the idol, and the ignorance of the idolater, or grasping with rash and unholy hands the sacred mysteries of the heavens, the mind shrinks back oppressed and appalled, and it is difficult to keep the proper medium between admiration and condemnation.

It is often indeed easier to remember than to forget the recorded origin of art,—that the first architect, the first musician, the first artificer in brass or iron, thought out their inventions, and worked their works outside “the presence of the Lord.” (Gen. iv. 16—22; Eccles. vii. 29.)

In this sketch of the æsthetic, it is necessary to turn for a few moments to poetry, which combines within its being something of all the rest, poetry being the voice that gives expression to beauty,

and thus makes "a thing of beauty become a joy for ever." Solemn and stately as architecture, true poetry, like the arch, points to the heavens,—like the pillar, it is founded on the earth. Like music, it breathes a harmony in its measured cadences which strikes the mysterious chords of the heart and ear, and speaks in another language than that of the outer tongue. Like painting, it adds a new grace to things that are living, it gives presence to things that are absent, and revivifies things that are dead. Like sculpture, it points through death to life, through dreams to reality, through the pale clay to the rich risen glories beyond. It is with joy and gratitude that we acknowledge that this combination of influence has not been altogether unconsecrated to God. Many a mourner in Zion has been soothed by the stricken singer of Olney; many an aspiring soul has been awed and animated by the heaven-seeing, though sightless bard. In our own days, and in our own circles of Christian women, we have some who unite the double gifts of true minstrelsy, like such "sweet singers" as Frances Ridley Havergal, and the authoress of "Ezekiel." But there is much yet to be done. With these, and a few more exceptions, the mass of our finest poetry is essentially *un-Christian*; that is to say, it is homage paid to the God of nature, and not to the

God of grace. Apart from the poisoned though beautifully feathered arrows which have sped from the strings of Byron and his school, even in Wordsworth's exquisite thoughts and verses we find a recognition of God, it is true, whose works are celebrated, and whose praises are sung in words of thrilling beauty, but the sinning, sorrow-stricken creature is sent to nature's loveliness, to God's creative power alone for strength and consolation. Or let us turn to one from beyond the Atlantic, who might almost be supposed to possess "the mailed hand" of his own beautiful "star of strength," so peculiarly do his arousing strains sound like a trumpet before the battle. But even in him we are disappointed: there is something awanting in his wisdom; and we feel as if we were to go on a warfare at our own charges, or to win heaven with our own weapons.

The deficiency seems to lie in this,—that poets are slow to perceive that the essence and being of the highest poetry is to be found in the religion of the Bible and the Cross!—that the doctrines which men call methodistical, the histories which men look upon as commonplace and hackneyed, the relations between the soul and its God which men scorn as fanatical and absurd, are in reality combinations of truth and poetry which must have remained un-

known to the unaided, unregenerated heart and eye and ear of man. We yet need fresh stars to arise, or new and holier reflections to glow from some already above the horizon, which will shine with the calm, strong, holy radiance of consecrated genius, dispelling the soul's darkness, rebuking the soul's sin, soothing the soul's sorrow; not rivalling indeed the Book of books, the Poem of poems, but furthering and reflecting its truth and its beauty.

Leaving the worship of the Fine Arts simply for their own sake, on one side, I wish to advert to a question on which there is much to be said on both sides: *i.e.*, whether it is right and expedient, in these days, to dedicate costly and beautiful stones to the worship of God. The most forcible of conscientious arguments are drawn from the Old Testament, where certainly that which was externally beautiful held a prominent place and a powerful sway. Of course there are the usual,—and as some of us think sufficient,—answers in the natural passing away of the old things of the type when the substance was graciously revealed; but I would point to one special difference in these two dispensations. God had revealed in some measure to His chosen saints, especially to David,—the man after His own heart,—the great truth of the godly man, the man distinct from the men of the world,

having a dwelling-place in God Himself (as in Psalm xci. 1, 2, 9); but the further and higher truth, that God was to dwell in the believer was not revealed till New Testament times. The temple, with its fair columns and "pleasant stones" and beautiful colours, was therefore the type of what each believing soul now has to be. This truth is repeated over and over again: "We are His house" (Heb. iii. 6); "Ye are the temples of the living God" (2 Cor. vi. 16); "A habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22); "God's building" (1 Cor. iii. 9), in which He delights to dwell.

The whole work of God for His people, and the work He calls on His people to do for Him, has been progressive. There were the altars of the wandering tent-life of the patriarchs, then the little tabernacle, then the great Temple. Then came the time of Jesus, the humble carpenter,—who came forth from the proud building over which He had authority, with its palms and pomegranates, its golden ceilings and graven cherubim,—praying in the mountains and the deserts, preaching by the brookside and in the garden, breaking bread and blessing wine in a simple "upper room." His workers were but twelve fishermen or others of the like stamp, and afterwards seventy sent forth to heal

the sick and say that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Still progressive, however, our Lord tells them that "greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father." (John xiv. 12.) And when the promise was fulfilled, and the mighty rushing Spirit came and filled all the house (Acts ii. 2), what greater works did they do? Did they go back to build temples? Did they raise stately houses and polish costly stones? Yes: but it was temples of souls! Three thousand souls one day, five thousand another, and each one a temple of the Holy Ghost.

There is, however, a strong New Testament argument also brought forward for the acceptable use of that which is costly and beautiful for the service of God. When Mary broke in pieces the costly fragrant vase, to do honour to her Lord, the utilitarian disciples were rebuked for saying "it might have been sold and given to the poor;" and could it be proved that it was *only* to do honour to the Lord Jesus, the argument would be unanswerable; but then the reason of this being acceptable is distinctly stated,—a reason which never can occur again: "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." Beside the honour paid to the dishonoured One, it was a recognition by a woman's heart of the great

truth of His decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem, which the disciples distinctly refused to understand or believe. (Matt. xvi. 21—23.) So of this poor woman Jesus could say, "She hath wrought a good work," not only "on" Me, but rather, as it may be read, "in Me,"—touchingly confirming the tender, wistful complaint of, as we would say, "not being understood" in John xiv. 9. But in the glory does He still need to be honoured in exactly the same way as in the humiliation? Oh, no! And He makes it clear: "Ye have not Me always,"—always, in one sense, at His Father's right hand,—always, in another, abiding in us by His Spirit, but "not always," nay, never again in this low down estate.

"Doth your risen Lord, with His glorious brow,
Need the costly vase and the ointment *now*?
'Twas but for the 'buried,' the shamed, and the dead,
For 'the poor ye have *always*,' the Master said."

Yes, in all time coming He makes provision for what is to be done with things of cost which might be "sold for much." The poor ye have with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 7—13; Mark xiv. 3—9; John xii. 3—8.) Comprehensive is the meaning of the word *poor*; poor in body and poor in soul,—both need the gold of the Church. Poor

ruined souls cannot be sufficiently worked and built up into temples not made with hands, without money. It is an ordinance of God, that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. Shall the silver and the gold of, at all events, Christian men and women, go to the carpenters, and the masons, and the upholsterers, and the sculptors, and the carvers, who build up costly stones and spires of fretted work, and memorial windows, and velvet cushions and draperies, or shall it go to the true architects through the land, who work with the Lord in building up His spiritual houses? Of such decorations, though in themselves innocent as "doves," yet when interfering with the higher beauty, and setting of "living stones" (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, Isa. liv. 11, 12), we may be sure that the voice of Jesus sounds a message: "Take these things hence." (John ii. 16.) Home Mission work is crippled on every side; Continental Missions, and Missions to the heathen, are crying out for bread: shall they be given dead stones? Oh, what things might be done if believing men and women gave freely of this gold!

"No gold : no gold !

OUR hearts are heavy and full of care,
For the woes of others are hard to bear ;
For the breadless table we have no bread,
No couch for the wanderer's weary head ;
No raiment to wrap round the shivering form,
No fire with its flushes so rosy warm.

“No gold : no gold !

There are sick in the city,—we hear them moan ;
Soul and body are sad and lone :
A DOUBLE HEALER we pine to give,
But the Healer needeth him gold to live.
We want to gather these lambs that roam,
But there needeth gold for the lost ones Home.

“No gold : no gold !

There are souls that are wandering all around,
Who have never heard the Gospel sound ;
In rags and in tatters of divers hue,
The *many* shrink from the templed *few* :
But our hands are heavy, our feet unshod,
For we have not the gold to go forth for God.” *

But on every side, and in well-nigh every denomination of Established or Dissenting Churches, are springing up costly edifices, on which could not be written “Owe no man anything,” for the costly materials have been built together, while yet there was no money to pay for them.

Dr. Duff, the eminent missionary, wrote lately on this point of debt : “It puts the Christian on a lower platform of piety than the idolatrous heathen. There is no country that has in it a larger number of temples than India, some of them the largest and most stupendous in the world ; and yet from the one end of India to the other there never has

* From “Cry of Missionary Hearts.” Sold by W. Mack, 38, Park Street, Bristol. 3d. a dozen, or 1s. 6d. a hundred.

been, there is not now, a single temple with a farthing of debt on it. This fact having struck me, I was wont often to inquire into the cause. The reason uniformly assigned was, 'Oh, this is a house devoted to such or such a deity (male or female, as the case might be), and if there were any debt on it it would be unacceptable to the god or goddess. We profess to offer it to him or her as a free gift on our part, to manifest our adoring homage, and if there were debt on it it should not be our's to offer or to give. It would be an offering or giving of what was not our's—what did not belong to *us*, but to him or them to whom we owe the money which built it. It would be a mendacious offering.'"

Everywhere, therefore, where there is work crippled for want of money, you may be pretty sure to find *one* reason in men's purses being emptied to pay the debts of decorated ecclesiastical buildings. While I hold these views very strongly, I am obliged to confess that, with the usual tendency of the human mind, some have passed into the opposite extreme; and while anxious to avoid even the appearance of evil, have sometimes in reality incurred the charge of apparent disrespect to the service of God. This is much to be avoided, for the *moral* beauty will be marred by all unnecessary

homeliness, and more especially by want of reverence and order, which may as painfully distract the attention of the worshipper, as the opposite extreme of glare and gorgeousness. Although I deprecate all external pomp and worldly decorations, yet I would that the day might yet come when every place of worship throughout our land will be a type, in its beautiful order, purity, and simplicity, of the Gospel which is proclaimed within its walls. It is a rare but a pleasing sight to see the house of God surrounded by well-watered flowers, grass, and shrubs, the fresh fragrance and bright blossoms carefully watched and tended, producing an exquisite harmony of thought and feeling, well suited to the worship of Him who is the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley.

No need either for what is too often the case,—that while music is rejected as an end, it is paid no attention to in the services of God's especial day. In the Book which is so emphatically a history of the "new song," we have repeated notices and examples of the proper use of music. We find a man, dark and gloomy, troubled with an evil spirit, although a monarch and a conqueror. A youthful musician struck the chords of a harp, and as the sublime strains rose to heaven, expressive of hope and joy, the evil one was affrighted

and fled to his den, unable to endure the torture of such soft, thankful sounds. We find the same sweet singer of Israel, in after years, himself a troubled man, a sinning man, a persecuted man, and what do we still hear? In the midst of the rushing waves and billows, we hear a song louder than they,—through the darkness of the night we see the shining strings of the harp, and in the midst of tears and trouble and temptation, we again listen to a voice of hope and harmony. If ever earth's music seemed sweeter to the singers of heaven than their own hallelujahs, it must have been when such words as these breathed and burned from the lyre of David: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God." We find the Lord's army in the wilderness of Tekoa: behind them a waste country, before them a great company from Moab and Mount Seir, and vain was the help of man. Hark: a solemn hush, and then a burst of song! Though all else seemed dark and unlovely, they could yet celebrate the beauties of holiness: "And WHEN they began to sing and to praise," the Lord set ambushments against the foe, "and they were smitten" (See 2 Chron. xx. 20—22.) There, too, the meditative

find counsel and occupation for their hours of solitude: "Speak to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." (Eph. v. 19.) There the teacher finds attractive matter and manner: "Teaching and admonishing one another singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. iii. 16.) There the young and mirthful-hearted are taught to express their gushing happiness: "Is any merry, let him sing psalms." (James v. 13.) Nor is the Voice, itself musical as the sound of many waters, silent with regard to the future. We hear of the harpers harping upon their harps, who shall surround the Lamb with sweetest harmony upon Mount Zion. (Rev. xiv. 1—3.) We are told of the singers and players upon instruments who are yet to be in the city of our God, even the New Jerusalem (Ps. lxxxvii. 7); and we know that every redeemed victor upon the sea of glass, shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, "having the harps of God." (Rev. xv. 2, 3.) Let us, then, even now be preparing for the melodious future, by creating a melodious present. While we reject music as an idol,—while we oppose her usurpation in our worship of a place not her own,—let us take heed that we are not neglecting a gift that is indeed God's gift; let us see to it that we are not

refusing to express, in a way suitable and pleasing unto Him, all that He has done for us,—let our lips, as well as our hearts, not only be more frequent in singing “a new song,” and more diligent in “making melody” in our own hearts unto God, but let us see that the children of the Church of God are taught betimes to do so in sweet and simple harmony.

There is one practical lesson about our “services of song,” which it seems as if we needed to learn from the Old Testament. We find no hint there of sacred music being sung by the profane. David, in his wise institution of the offices of God’s house, as well as his own, particularly orders that the music of the temple be in the care of those who can record, as well as sing the praises of the Lord (1 Chron. xvi. 4, 5); while the instruction as well as the practice of sacred song is kept in the same hands. It seems that they “set apart” Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and Chenaniah, who were to train the voices and the hands of the young musicians. (1 Chron. xv. 22, and xxv. 1—7.) Well would it be if none but those who belong to the “royal priesthood,” the “peculiar people,” were to instruct the young to lead the praises of God, and to keep large audiences thrilling with strains which ought to be from the heart to the heart.

XIV.

Cost and Cross.




“Is this a time to plant and build,
Add house to house and field to field ;
When round our walls the battle lowers,
When mines are hid beneath our towers,
And watchful foes are stealing round
To scorch and spoil the holy ground ;
While souls are wandering far and wide,
And curses swarm on every side ?”

KEBLE.

Cost and Cross.

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.”
—HAGGAI ii. 8.

“Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants!”—2 KINGS v. 26, compare with HAGGAI i. 4—9.

 VERY common argument for the adoption in these days of the costly stones and the richly decorative architecture of the Old Testament, is generally much as follows: Shall we let God's house go unadorned when we spend money to decorate our own houses? Which is as much to say, We intend to spend money in beautifying ourselves and our houses, and that we may do so with a safe conscience, we must also decorate the house of God. But the question may fairly be put, Is such material decoration expedient for the one more than the other? In the striking passages of the Old Testament, quoted above, there is no direct prohibition against decorating the houses

in which man is to live his little while on the earth; but the point of rebuke certainly is, that WHILE they do the one, the other,—*i.e.*, “His house,”—was allowed to “lie waste.” If we take the New Testament spiritual definition of the Lord’s house, which we have considered in the last chapter, we come to a much wider claim upon us, and upon our means, than in the Old Testament. The one temple, costly and magnificent as it undoubtedly arose, was an operation over and done with, after which, as far as we know, the time might legitimately come for private ceiled houses, rich garments, etc.

But when we consider the spiritual house that has to be built,—many temples within a temple,—and the rich quarries whence living stones have to be excavated, the finishing of the House can never take place until there is not a soul left to be saved and built up into it. Beside this, there is another New Testament side of the subject, which did not, and could not, appear in olden time. We are now cross-bearers. These words,—“If any man will come after ME, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow ME,”—may be called the marching orders of each New Testament saint. The claim came not from the magnificent Messiah-King, but from a man of poverty (2 Cor. viii. 9),

who pleased not Himself (Rom. xv. 3), in whom was no earthly beauty (Isaiah liii. 2), who made Himself of no reputation (Phil. ii. 7), who yet most distinctly left an example, as well as a command, that we should follow in His self-denying steps. (1 Peter ii. 21.) We also find that sometimes, and in some cases, there was a literal going out of ceiled houses and forsaking kindred and lands, selling all and giving to the poor, both enjoined and commended by our Saviour, the great Cross-bearer. (Matt. xix. 21—29.)

The service of God is, however, peculiarly a reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1), and He has given us reasonable minds, wherewith, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we may balance the truths revealed to us in His Word. While individual cases are thus selected for injunction and commendation, there is no specific command that each one who follows Jesus should leave his ceiled house if he has one, or the influential position or "calling" in which God has called him, and live like a fisherman or a cottager. There are, however, some grand wide rules which one would say were imperative on all followers of Christ, yet it is impossible not to see, that if they were considered so by the Church of God, taking it in its wide Catholic sense,—the whole body of believers,—her work for souls,—

her building apparatus would be in a far more prosperous state. Let us consider these rules for a little.

I. Entire consecration to the Lord of the whole being is the Bible rule for each Christian. This we have already considered in individual giving of "our ourselves unto the Lord." We further find it brought into daily operation over habits and actions by these words: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.)

II. We find a very solemn ground of this consecration, as regards our means, in the Divine enunciations of the Old Testament: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," as well as "the cattle upon a thousand hills." (Psalm l. 10.) So that this proprietary claim covers the cost of our daily lives, the very material for our daily meals. No portion of our expenditure is really our's if we are Christ's: the whole is at His cost, and must be done for His glory. I heard a "chief man" say, not long ago, that for this very reason he could not lay out a sixpence without asking for God's guidance in the matter; and he added, with touching gratitude, "but the Lord is

so very good : when I have felt that I could not conscientiously buy some fruit for my children, He has sent me, by a friend, an abundant supply that very day." Many may smile or frown, as the case may be, at such a statement, while others will feel a thrill of gratitude at the simple record of a rare consecration in things that are least, and connect with it the promised blessings of Luke xvi. 10; Matt. xxv. 23.

III. There is the daily rule of cross-bearing, which however little it may be thought of, is as binding now and as essential in all true "following" as eighteen centuries ago. It is not a state of resignation to the inevitable crosses of daily life, but it is a "*taking up*" our cross,—not the making of a cross by asceticism, or for the purposes of self-exaltation and self-holiness, but taking up *our* cross: *i.e.*, the very one appointed for us. When we read, that not only the eating and drinking, but whatsoever we do in daily life is to be affected by the rule of consecration, it is easy to see that whatever our constitution of mind may be, there is plenty of daily cross-bearing ready to our hand. Another text of Scripture makes it plain that this is not necessarily fasting, or leaving off good, nay, even pleasant food ; "Princes are to eat

in due season," though their motive is to be "for strength, and not for drunkenness" (Eccles. x. 17): *i.e.*, not for self-indulgence. There is, however, this imperative rule of the cross,—that whether, what, or when we eat or drink, is to be entirely ruled by God's will, and not by our's, whether it be for fasting or feasting.

IV. We cannot view this subject as a whole, without seeing that as there is in God's Word an inequality of temporal rank and position, so there will be an inequality of expenditure among those composing God's spiritual house, even as in "every great house" there are vessels of gold and of silver, of wood and of stone, most unequal not only in size, but in cost. One specific practical rule, therefore, can never exactly rule two persons; but let it be carefully kept in mind that there must be an equality in the great ruling twin-motives, God's will and God's glory. The self-denial of his cross is equally incumbent on Christian peer or Christian peasant, as well as on the many grades of difference between. "I could dismiss half our servants," said the wife of a man high in office, with many claims of hospitality, "but would that be for God's glory?" "Certainly not," one could not but answer, for Christian in-

fluence and position undoubtedly well used for the Lord, would then have been seriously crippled. Such a case needs and applies THE rule of entire consecration quite as much as in others, where such claims of position and corresponding expenditure not existing, the same RULE leads to a severer simplicity and more visible cross-bearing. It still comes to this,—that the will of God, carefully sought and followed, is to rule every inch of every life.

Whilst individuality is a great law of God, and each life, each house ruled by the great ruling Power is only subject to the Master, yet it is not unseemly to press upon the Church the great need of going back upon her first principles, and beseech of the “Princes of God” within her, to follow the grand Bible laws of consecration, cross-bearing, and God’s proprietary rights. Were these fully followed out, making all allowance for difference of station, and therefore difference of standard in mere cost, the law of the cross would cut off from the Church many a needless luxury, many an expensive dish, much costly clothing, many a statue, picture, and mirror; *all*, in short, that owe their origin to self-pleasing, to mere worldly conformity, or to emulation of neighbours. It is true that this would produce a far greater simplicity in the feasts, houses,

and garments of Christians, than in those of the world, and this to many would be part of the cross-bearing. While we find nothing to countenance affected peculiarities, or setting up to be better than others, it cannot be denied that Bible laws, as well as Bible examples for Bible lives, do run in the opposite groove from the world's easier lines. In true simplicity of life carried out in spirit, if not always in letter, we shall find the greatest likeness to Him who is our Model, from which every day the customs of the Church (especially of those members of it in "high places") seem more and more to be departing. It is only the last half of the often-quoted lines, which seems now to be true :—

"Man needs but little here below,
Nor needs that little long."

One cannot but be struck by the severe censure and punishment even in the Old Testament, of Hezekiah's love of display in the matter of his house expenditure (comp. Is. xxxix. 2—6, and 2 Chron. xxxii. 31); and by the thoughts of our blessed Saviour concerning the pomp of Solomon, who in His simple judgment was not arrayed so beautifully or so becomingly as the lilies of the field. Nor does even the earthly happiness of the Church grow in the measure of her worldliness; none can

know the full joy and the perfect peace of Christ, who are burdened with the rules and opinions and fancied necessities of the world. "You have added to your troubles a new want," said an American Bishop to his children, when they made use of new luxuries. "Make as few things as possible necessary for your comfort," said a wise man, "which rule has been better to me than £10,000 a year." Moderation made known unto all men, has its significant place in Phil. iv. 4, 5. Of course if people don't want joy and peace in the close presence of the Lord, these views do not hold. Women not professing godliness, cannot be expected to abstain from the world's trappings. It was not the Egyptians, but the Lord's people who were rebuked for their inordinate love of the fleshpots, and the fish, cucumbers, and melons of Egypt. (Num. xi. 5, 6.)

There is a plain practical reason and purpose for such simplicity: viz., that without the purses as well as the prayers of the Lord's people, now as of old, the Lord's true New Testament tabernacle (Heb. viii. 2) will lie waste as far as man's responsibility is concerned. This entire consecration is needed to remove one of the scandals of the Christian Church,—the serious crippling of the funds of almost all Christian work. Thus only can "giving" be equalized,—by this blessed

habit becoming general, which is at present the custom of comparatively few, whose hearts almost lose the joy of it from the sense of what they give in countless directions being but a drop in the ocean. When the cost of unnecessary luxuries, hoarded jewelry, and such like is poured into the treasury, the building of the spiritual house will proceed far more rapidly, and there will be fewer "poor" in the land, destitute in soul as in body.

There are many safeguards against this sort of self-denial becoming mere asceticism. Of each piece of cross-bearing and peculiarity, we must say, as a saint of old said of the lepers and sinners whom she tended: "I do not see them, but Jesus Christ in them." The spirit of the Word is also in many ways opposed to ascetic peculiarity merely for its own sake. "God giveth us richly all things to enjoy," is a statement which if taken with the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," places consecration in its true position, not of asceticism, but of unmingled blessedness. The very sacrifice, the effort and self-control which a plain and simple way of life is to many, is thus made a means of joy and blessing, while the numerous comforts which God gives and allows to His people, are intended to be heartily enjoyed. "So tenderly the dear Lord cares," wrote

one saint now in glory, of a piece of temporal comfort. Agnes Jones too wrote of "some lovely flowers," sent just as the old ones were to be thrown away, "So even this want is met almost before it is felt. Certainly it is wonderful how God cares for me in the least thing." Asceticism may set a man on the top of a highly uncomfortable pillar, or make him put hard peas into his shoes, or live in an untidy hovel; but it will never, like entire consecration, turn every gift of God into a blessing, nor produce a seemly, well-ordered, well-proportioned life. Surely the earthly homes wherein dwell God's spiritual temples, should be models not of expense and useless indulgence, but of the beauty of happy order, purity, and cheerfulness, like all true "houses of worship."

This rule of entire consecration would not only make a great difference in the funds of all Christian work, but it would prove as much of a spiritual help to those noble workmen who are found here and there, thank God, in increasing numbers, who have devoted their "own selves" to the service of God. With regard to the silver and the gold necessary for spiritual house-building, and the frequently occurring accompanying temporal needs so urgently requiring relief, FAITH is needed by the workers,—faith certainly between themselves and

God. Yet it is a sad thought that only partially consecrated brethren and sisters do act as stumbling-blocks in the way of faith, and as refrigerators in its atmosphere. It is more difficult to believe in the silver and the gold being the Lord's, when it has to come out of reluctantly and scantily opened purses. One result is also that while there are always those who do give their substance to the Lord, the frequency of the claims upon such produce something of the same disappointing effects. Hence the complaints which meet one's eyes and one's ears so frequently as to the want of funds for the Lord's cause. Hence, too, the objectionable system that has crept in of paid collectors, and subscription lists, and begging cards, and close, personal, and sometimes scolding appeals for money. A more entire consecration of the Church would certainly prevent much of this system, for then giving would come to be again what it was in Old and New Testament times,—a "free-will offering," the very power to be willing, however, a gift from God. (1 Chron. xxix. 14; Ps. cx. 3; 2 Cor. ix. 8—11.)

The present system seems to have evil consequences in two directions. It makes the will of man often the rule in giving, rather than the will of God; among those, indifferent or lukewarm to Christian work, subscription cards or lists are con-

sidered,—as I have heard them called by such,—
“pocket pistols!” They give in consequence grudgingly, and only because they are ashamed to refuse; and in such a case it may be said,—

“Rich gifts wax poor
When givers prove unkind.”

Others, again, however warmly interested, sometimes give their subscriptions equally from fear of refusal or giving disappointment, when their hearts are pointing in some other direction; so that they, too, thus make the will of the brethren, and not the will of the Lord, their motive. Giving should always be at our “own voluntary will” (Lev. i. 3), and because, like David, we have “*set our affections*” on the house of our God. (1 Chron. xxix. 3.) With much sympathy for workers thus entrammelled, I would suggest that the first principle of faith—*i.e.*, asking God and not man—may practically be far more adopted in the Church, even in its present condition, than is generally thought of. “Were half the breath thus vainly spent” in lamentation and appeals, spent in making known the case to the Lord, I believe, and I say so from some, though not yet nearly enough experience, that

“Our cheerful song would oftener be,—
Hear what the Lord hath done for me.”

Such examples as George Müller of Bristol,—the mighty men of German Christian philanthropy, with some noble English workers who “follow in their train,” lay a great responsibility upon other workers, for the Lord’s treasure-house is equally open to us, and “ask and receive” as much a spiritual law for us as for them. “I do just the same,” said a begging Christian one day: “I never go out to beg without asking the Lord to act upon the hearts I appeal to.” But if we thus begin in the spirit, why should we conclude in the flesh? The Lord is able to open the purses, as well as to incline the hearts. Of course the making known the progressive needs as well as the employment of such aid, as done by Mr. Müller in his reports, and by others in the columns of the “*Christian*,” is both according to Scripture and common-sense, and in no way interferes with the will of the Lord, and not social or brotherly will, being prominent in the act of giving.

The question is often mooted of how it is best for every consecrated Christian to employ God’s means; and the system of “storing” is more and more seen to be strictly Scriptural, and therefore practically useful. (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) It is easy to see, however, that if it is taken to mean the storing of a certain tithe of possessions, be it in tenths,

fifths, or halves, as what is to be given to the Lord, and what remains to be our own, it would materially interfere with the entire giving over of means, will, and self to Him, according to the primitive example of 2 Cor. viii. 1—5. Even such a partial storing, if it became universal, would be a most useful improvement on the present state of things, but it would not be the higher or “more excellent way.” The habit of storing in itself, however, is so practical and so methodical, that it may well find an honoured place in the habits of the children of the God of order and true economy: so much stored weekly, monthly, and yearly for home missions, so much for foreign missions, so much for what may be called the desultory work of the Lord, so much for His service in home and hospitality work, so much for adorning the Gospel by a sober, Scriptural rule of garments,—in each His work and His will equally sought and performed.

There is one mode of expenditure in much fashionable repute among many Christians, which with all diffidence I cannot help touching upon in conclusion: it is that of rewarding living Christian workers with expensive testimonials of unnecessary articles of display or adornment, and of commemorating their going to their higher Service with the Lord by statues, costly tombstones, or

memorial windows. It does seem as if the truer the service of heavenly as well as of earthly patriots, the less ~~do~~ they need to be thus kept in mind ; and that the thought of the following lines, written upon an old-time hero, will much more apply to the heroes of the cross, and to their undying, never-finished work :—

“Go build a statue to name unknown,
Deck a dying brow with a life-like crown ;
Raise ye on crag or on castle height
Monumental bronze to a tilt-yard knight.
But the grand old heroes of ancient time,
THEY need no pillar,—THEY need no rhyme ;
THEY need not the life of the sculptor’s art,—
THEY live in the throb of a nation’s heart.
THEIR trophy is blazoned, though cut not in stone,
THEIR star shines bright from the centuries gone.
List to the lilt of the maiden’s song,—
’Tis the hero’s praise she has loved so long ;
Hark to the words of the silvered sire,
As he kindleth again with the patriot’s fire ;
Hark to the honoured and household name,
For these are the trophies of lasting fame !”

But while mere decorative reminiscences are still less needed wherewith to honour those whom *our* King delights to honour, there are ways, which his work would suggest, in which the righteous man may be kept in “everlasting remembrance :” by the help and furtherance of the great objects of his life. The cottage hospital, the plain memorial church, the iron room, the foundation of a medical

mission dispensary, a Scripture-reader or Bible-woman established in some destitute locality, are now becoming more common as memorials of the dead who die in the Lord, and might also be acceptably used even for His living workers, to encourage their faith and reward their services. But such honours are not yet sufficiently the law of the Church to prevent frequent pain and surprise at the sinking of God's wealth in the costly stones of earthly honours and memorials, instead of putting it out to interest; so that thus their works may follow those "not lost" even as workers, but "gone before."

XV.

Service.

"He whom thou servest slights
Not even His weakest one :
No deed, though poor, shall be forgot,
However feebly done.

"The prayer, the wish, the thought,
The faintly-spoken word,
The plan that seemed to come to nought,—
Each has its own reward.

"Reward not like the deed,—
That poor, weak deed of thine ;
But like the God Himself who gives,—
Eternal and Divine."

II. BONAR.

"And it is sweet to do a little thing
For Him who loves us so."

B. M.

Service.

“Shewing all good fidelity.”—TIMOTHY ii. 9, 10.

“He that is faithful in that which is least.”—LUKE xvi. 10.

IN the world of creation there are predacious insects, which seize their victims by their strange counterfeit appearance. The mantis family, for instance,—individuals of which one sees even in the south of Europe, brown, dry, and motionless as a withered leaf, till the prey is fairly within its grasp. The roseleaf-mantis of the tropics is another more beautiful, and equally dangerous trap.* The same wonderful property is still more developed in the world of spirits. An old name for Satan was the *Dei Simius*, or Ape of God, because of his dangerous and deadly gift of counterfeit. God has His wonders, but Satan has his lying wonders; God has His apostles, but Satan has his false apostles; God has His angels of light, and

* See “The Reign of Law.”

Satan can to all appearance transform himself into one of them. (2 Cor. xi. 13—15.) God has His eminent pioneers: Satan has his also, ready to take the advantage. A case in point is well known in the history of the day. Portuguese slave-traders commence their diabolical traffic by imitating closely Livingstone's wise and cordial ways, and professing to be of the same stamp.

These are old-established facts, but they are not sufficiently recognised and guarded against as evils belonging to our every-day lives. Nowhere does this power of counterfeit meet us more dangerously and more blighting than in our work for God. When our great enemy cannot get men and women to be his acknowledged workers, and do his visible work, he counterfeits works apparently as unlike his own as possible, and gets Christians to work partially or altogether at them. These are the burnt-up works of 1 Cor. iii. 15. They are generally as like the abiding ones as the serpent rods of Jannes and Jambres are to that of Aaron (Ex. vii. 10—12; 2 Tim. iii. 8),—with exactly the same result: they are swallowed up; the time comes when they are no more seen. Not that they do not have their reward; much the same reward, too, as that of the Egyptian magicians, who must have had a few moments of self-complacency, and praise of courtiers and Monarch,

till their counterfeit serpents were confounded by the two real wonder-workers.

In looking back on our working-day lives, nothing is so startling as the consciousness which mercifully is often given in this life, of the many counterfeit works which we have complacently laboured at. When this new light flashes in upon us, we can, I think, know very surely that it is of God, if it sends us to His Holy Word, there to find the signs whereby we may know what true service really is. In the light of Scripture, what we have been accustomed to call work, shrinks into a smaller compass, and service assumes a much larger bulk. The counterfeit occupies certain hours and intermittent moods and modes, and leaves large gaps between; the real fills up every nook and cranny of the life and time. The counterfeit looks down upon small things, and either leaves them on one side, or performs them in a grudging, humiliated spirit; the real looks on them as precisely the same in the sight of the Master as the loftiest work, and puts into them the same care and spirit. The counterfeit is restless and uneasy when there is no "great thing to do," or "secret thing to know;" the real has such constant occupation, that it has no time to think whether it ought to have more or less work. The counterfeit

is bent on having the sort of work it likes best, and can do most of; the real is satisfied with the will of Another.

The passage in Titus at the head of this chapter, along with its kindred ones, is generally supposed to refer entirely to the work of the servants of men. We very properly point it out to them as the model of domestic service; but do we not forget to take these words as precious discriminating lessons against the counterfeit for ourselves as the servants of God? There we find—

I. That service without intelligent holiness is naught. The servant is exhorted to be "obedient" to his "own master." Obedience is the simplest explanation of that much-quoted term, Holiness, and it is necessarily accompanied with a distinct knowledge both of the requirements and the individuality of our "own" Master. The meaning of sanctification is "setting apart;" and which of us would value a servant that is only half our's and half somebody else's? Where shall we find such practical possessive descriptions of blessed service, as in our Saviour's own short definition, "Ye are MY friends, if ye do whatsoever I COMMAND you" (John xv. 14); and in His beloved Apostle's doubled test, "Hereby we do know that

we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John ii. 3)? Real work, then, is simple obedience, and obedience to One whom we know and trust and dwell with as our own Master; so that we know experimentally the difference between His service (2 Chron. xii. 8) and that of the other invisible master.

II. Moreover, the servant has "to PLEASE" his own master "well in all things." This at first sight seems a human element, only concerning the human master and servant; but the Spirit uses this very word so often that we may take it as the true motto-word, or trade-mark, to distinguish the real from the counterfeit. We must remember, too, that it is a far wider claim than to please the Sovereign at a distance, for whom some great outstanding services would be enough; but it is the claim of our own indwelling Master. Satan will teach workers how to please themselves, or to please the world, or to please their Christian brethren; but he cannot if he would, and he would not if he could, teach them how to give pleasure unto God. Oh, how this one thought changes the whole aspect of life and of work and of self-examination! What was the leading thought in our minds when we prepared for our last address,

or taught our classes last Sunday, or gave that tract in the railway-carriage, or visited the sick, or spoke to that unconverted soul? Was it to please God well? or was it from any other sort of pleasure? or was it from that very frequent source and spring of work—duty? On the other hand, when unable to do these outer works, how did we write that letter, or entertain that visitor, or guide those household affairs, or rebuke that child? Did we do it for the pleasure of the Master? Each of us can expand or particularize this Scriptural thought for our own guidance, taking such passages as 1 Thess. iv. 1; Heb. xi. 6; xiii. 21; John viii. 29.

III. "Not answering again." Well, this at least must apply to cook, housemaid, or butler. How could we answer God again? From the days of Job downwards, alas, there have been few of us who have not in some periods of rebellious sorrow and hard thinking, spoken back to God! But let us take the marginal reading, as containing more of the shade of meaning that is useful to us to consider: "Not gainsaying." A servant may say never a disrespectful word, and yet may cause much trouble, simply by his or her will being different from the master's. When not only in our lives of service, but in our actual deeds of work, we follow

our own ways, modes, and designs, without seeking His will; or when we struggle against His obstacles and hindrances which keep us from what we call work, we are doing this very thing of gainsaying God. Will before work, is what our Master specially asks from us. Paul knew this well, when he prayed that the Colossians might be "filled with the knowledge of His will; . . . that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work" (Col. i. 7—10); and that the Hebrews "might be made perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." The special point of his teaching would seem to be the avoidance of that inner wordless gainsaying of God's smaller manifestations of His will, and the yielding to that inner working by Him who can alone give us the knowledge of His entire life-embracing will.

IV. "Not purloining." A bit for the household again. Yes: but for the household of faith as well. "Will a man rob God?" was the question put once, as if bordering on the impossible; but God Himself gives the answer: "Yet ye have robbed Me." (Mal. iii. 8.) And then the strange conversation goes on, as often since. "But ye say,

Wherein have we robbed Thee?" and then the answer, "In tithes and offerings:" the giving and preparing of which was the chief work of the Israelites. In the gifts and sacrifice of our service, then, we may be robbing God: a solemn thought for those of us who for long years have really intended to be honestly and faithfully wholly the Lord's servants. We have perhaps overlooked that very expressive word, "purloining," which as we mean it in English, implies small thefts. It is well known that there are on the whole respectable servants, who would not steal gold or silver, yet who think lightly of purloining small articles, or who would give short measure of time, strength, and thought. Is not this exactly the temptation of many of God's servants? The word perfect in some cases may be translated sincere: *i.e., sine cera*,—without wax,—the pure honey of service, without useless ingredients. When we offer Him services adulterated with the wax of self and of the world, we are dishonest in His sight: we are purloining from Him that which belongs to Him; and we are giving Him false weight and measure instead of that which He delights in, for in many places of Scripture we find His care over justness in balance and measure specially noted. (Deut. xxv. 14—16; Lev. xix. 35, 36; with 1 Chron. xxiii. 28—30;

Prov. xi. 1.) When the officers of the mint find that a gold coin is light of weight, they do not send it out into the world as a "purloining" servant of the public, but they cast it anew into the melting-pot. So also must the Master of the spiritual mint do with His gold, when because of short weight and measure, he takes no pleasure in it.

V. "But showing all good FIDELITY." Fidelity, or faithfulness, is the working side of faith. We cannot be good servants without being full of faith in the existence, in the will, and in the work of the Master. It is not to be eye-service, as in the case of those servants who work by sight. There are no littles in God's service, because faithfulness and not bulk is the test; and so "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." Service, however, is a training-school. He that used well the ten pounds, because he was faithful "in a very little," was thereby trained to have authority over ten cities. (Luke xix. 16, 17.) Even the commander-in-chief, and the admiral, and the statesman, have all to be trained in this way from small beginnings, and especially from small trusts; while in Scripture, judges, prophets, monarchs, were trained in the sheep-fold, threshing-place, and summer-orchard. Fidelity in every small

piece of work is not small fidelity, however, but on the contrary, must be great enough to suffice for great deeds. In the Old Testament days, the cords and pins were as much a custody and charge as the solemn ark and altars. (Num. iii. 36—37.) Had Zerubbabel despised the small “plummet” he would never have brought forth the great “head-stone.” (Zech. iv. 7—10.) As the counterfeit servant of God never bestows “ALL good fidelity,” in sight and out of sight, in season and out of season, so we may take this sort of obedience as a sure mark of the real service.

VI. “That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” True service is a beautiful thing. The calm, quiet, faithful domestic servant has the beauty of fitness. There is no bustle, no fuss, no obtrusiveness; he or she do not make haste: they have time to study the pleasure of the master, and to adorn rooms, tables, dishes, with certain graces, which the bustling, unfaithful servant has no time even to think of. So with the Lord’s household. There is use in this sort of beauty: the Gospel ought to be adorned, both to please the Master and to win fresh servants to Him. God’s service is peculiarly one of “gift:” He gives certain gifts, as we have seen, and they are to be

given back again. We are not to keep the best for ourselves, and then offer the worst. No : all the "best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first-fruits," ripe, young, and beautiful, are to be offered unto the Lord. And then,—wonderful use of these very gifts—they are given back to the servants, as in Num. xviii. 13, 14: "All mine is thine," says the Father-Master: "Eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Cant. v. 1.)

The very adorning beauty for the Master comes from the Master. The very pleasure we give the Master comes back to the servant's heart : "Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thy hand unto." (Deut. xii. 18.) The oil of joy ought to precede the work (see Is. lxi. 3, 4),—that oil of gladness which in its Divine measure makes the Master Himself "above" His "fellows," yet which must be also their real possession. (Ps. xlv. 7.) There are two very different questions which we meet with in the Word, and which typify two different states. "What shall we *do* that we may work the works of God?" How often this has been virtually on our lips ! And the answer points us to the faith which must be the foundation of all true service : "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." (John

vi. 28, 29.) Then faith prompts the further question, "Lord, what wilt *Thou have* me to do?" And in this consists the sweetness of true service, the coming to our "own" Master morning by morning, and getting from Him the orders for the day. Then only can our work be grounded on faith, and we truly faithful servants.

This daily work may only be, in the beautiful words of Lamartine,—

"Partout portant un peu de baume à la souffrance,
Aux corps quelque remède, aux âmes l'espérance,
Un secret au malade, au partant un adieu,
Un sourire à chacun, à tous un mot de Dieu,"—

but if all be done truly in the "word" and name and Spirit of Jesus, it will in no wise lose its reward; but it will be done with what comes from faith,—the Power of another, and not our own. It is impossible not to acknowledge the difference which the presence or absence of this wonderful thing, Power, exerts, not only in the work of outstanding workers, but also, in however small a way, in our own smallest work. What a strange, mighty lever there is occasionally; at other times, what miserable weakness! But on close inspection the lever is always when we are abiding in God's Power, and the failure always when we are looking for it in ourselves, or still oftener, merely as help

from without. Christ must BE the Power of all successful work, be it big work or be it little work. It is told that when Mr. Boulton showed Dr. Johnson round the great engine factory of Boulton and Watt, he said, "Sir, we sell here the thing that all men are in search of—POWER." And in the Word of God it may be truly said, we may buy without money and without price, that wonderful Personal Power which, all unlike the masters of the earth, He "is able" to give to His filial servants. Ah, when comes the day of burned-up, powerless, imitation work, how we shall grieve over the happy abiding service there might have been! Queen Catherine Parr thus wrote: "I worked as an hired servant, for wages or else for reward, and not as a loving child, for love alone, as I ought to have done." In country life one is often reminded of this peculiar aspect of child-like service, where often in the best managed farms you see the work done with bright faces and intelligent heads by the farmer's *sons and daughters*.

When that question is fairly and honestly asked of the Lord, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" the answer comes, and must never be put aside: "Whatsoever the King appointeth," we must be ready to do. "Little things" we all have that we can do, and the point is that they be done in the

most aristocratic way possible; that is, that they should be the very "best." The story is well known of the little converted maid-servant, who when asked how she knew that she loved Jesus, answered simply, "'Cause I cleans under the mats now!" But "chief women" have their mats as well as the little maid. Till each piece of work is done thoroughly, outside and in, for love of the Master, no one need pine for further service. Then there is that home and social work, of which Sir Thomas More spoke, when he said that "the daily interchange of loving-kindnesses had as strong a claim on his time as his public work." Then there is what may be called the ordinary work of Christians, which however may become indeed extraordinary when done with the power which keeps it out of the rut of daily form and observance,—the class, the mothers' meeting, the visiting of the sick, the giving away of books, tracts, etc. Then, even without stepping outside, Christian "chief women" can do much in making their houses centres of Christian influence, whence warm rays of love, prayer, and power may go out into other homes, hearts, and works, and thus form a living force against the antagonism of the world. We find a good example in the life of the late Princess Hohenlohe Langenburg, of whom the following

account was written: "In the inner walks of life she was sustained, through much bodily weakness and through many sorrows, by a profound resignation, and a loving and enlightened faith. At her husband's ancestral seat at Langenburg, as well as in the home of her latter years, at Baden, she occupied herself constantly in various works of charity,—the maintenance and judicious care of orphans, the multiplication of school accommodation, and all that concerned the social and religious welfare of the community. In the midst of that gay, and too often frivolous society which frequents the beautiful valley of the Oos, it was an encouragement for those who were privileged with her acquaintance, to know that in this little villa on the hill-side was such a constant spring of healthy, serious, elevated Christian life." *

In Scotch biography there is a beautiful account of one who strove to consecrate the whole of her daily life as service to her Lord. Caroline Oliphant, of Gask, was born in 1761, in a Jacobite nursery, where two others beside herself had been named for Prince Charles Edward,—Charles, Charlotte, Caroline. During part of her youth she had loved the

* Quoted from the *Times*, in "Woman's Work in the Great Harvest-field for 1872."

world. Finding at a ball in a watering-place that the ladies were too few for the dance, she drove home, awoke a young friend at midnight, and stood in waiting till she was equipped to follow her to the dance. Much better than dancing, she loved the Scottish airs with which Neil Gow's violin had made her so familiar. Best of all she loved to write for these airs, words purer, and not less touching than Scotland had hitherto known, such as the exquisite "Land of the Leal," and afterwards the "Auld Hoos," "Would ye be young again?" etc. In 1806 she was married to her cousin, Captain, afterwards Lord Nairn. Conversion to the Lord was in her case a very marked and narrow era. At Murthly Castle, a few words at morning worship, conducted by an English clergyman, "a winner of souls," were blessed to her. Faith grasped the promise, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out,"—the very words that were her comfort forty-five years later, during a severe attack of paralysis. From that hour she never had one doubt of God's love to her in Christ. But that forenoon she was seen no more: her fair face was spoiled with weeping. When she again appeared, her eye had caught the glory of the Son of God, and burned with love to Him of whom she henceforth could say, "Whose I am, and whom I serve." Her pen, her pencil, her

harp, as afterwards her coronet, were laid at His feet, to be henceforth used, *used up*, by and for the King. The stream of doing good found its way underground, repelling and overthrowing all earthly prejudices. How many a flower grew over its concealed channel,—how many a saint passed on refreshed, after alighting by the side of these unexpected waters! Husband and only child were taken from her, but there were left *souls to live for*. During the first years of a grief that divorced her from all the world, many an hour was stolen from sorrow by the devising of means to bring the Gospel before *each fellow-creature* with whom she was even indirectly brought into relation. Her fingers were never idle, and she used to work for the spread of the Gospel, while her lips were not ashamed to speak of it to the careless and the sceptical. Among her last words, ere yet she slept in Jesus, were these to a teacher of little children: “Remember, unless the work of Christ our Saviour comes in,—the ransom, the substitution,—what you teach is worthless for their souls.” *

Even if it is not always practicable for “chief women” to occupy chief posts in the Lord’s vineyard, let each see, to borrow Mrs. Barbour’s re-

* Abridged from Mrs. Barbour’s “Soul Gatherer.”

markable expression quoted above, that she is "*using up*" her life and her gifts in God's service.

This may be called the "Law of the House" for God's household servants. (Ezek. xliii. 12 ; Ps. xciii. 5.) How different from the unholy laws and "used up" gifts of too many of our chief women ! Contrast with such jaded lives these ringing joy-bells, ready to chime into every heart and house.

" Oh let our adoration for all that He hath done
Peal out beyond the stars of God, while voice and life are one !
And let our consecration be real, and deep, and true ;
Oh, even now our hearts shall bow, and joyful vows renew !—

" ' In full and glad surrender we give ourselves to Thee,
Thine utterly, and only, and evermore to be !
O Son of God, who lovest us, we will be Thine alone,
And all we are, and all we have, shall henceforth be Thine own ! ' "

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.



XVI.

Special Work.

“Where are the labourers? *Where?*
For the world’s great harvest-field
Is white, and the corn in the bursting ear
Doth plenteous promise yield :

“And the Lord of the harvest sends
This message to each,—‘My son,
Go work for Me ’mid the golden grain,
Till the shortening day is done.’

“And oh for the ready hand,
And the earnest purpose true,
To toil for Him on the waving plains,
Where the labourers stand so few !”

“‘The Son of God goes forth to war :
WHO follows in His train ?’
Oh, daughters of God, are there so few to answer ?”
FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Special Work.

“Greater works than these shall he do.”—JOHN xiv. 12.

“Have thou authority over ten cities.”—LUKE xix. 17.

EVERYWHERE we see that there is growth in the service of God ; and this is the why and the wherefore of the fact, that there are no littles with Him. Every small thing done for Him has in it the germ of something greater. This is the case even in the works of creation, as the little acorn which contains the stately oak. Also, in the work of the world, as before mentioned,—the General is first the ensign,—the Admiral the midshipman ; and so with all posts that are not sinecures. We no longer see, as we read of in history, boy Archbishops, or babies holding military commissions, as in Scotland of old time.* All good workers must learn to work by doing well the “least things ;” all good com-

* Where “the Major crying for his porridge,” is a standard jest to this day.

manders must learn to command themselves before they go out to command, at all events in the battles of the Lord. It is true that many of the Lord's people are so situated that they cannot get beyond the "daily charge" into the regions of outstanding work, but yet the same rule holds good for them: they are equally in training to have authority over ten cities, only it will be in the glory to come. In all ages, however, the Lord has called some among His people to come forward, *here and now*, to posts of authority equivalent to the ten cities. It behoves His workers therefore to be watching the tokens of their lives,—*patiently*, should their natural tendencies be to rush out into the battle; *self-denyingly* should they be among those who would rather stay at home: but to BE READY to use that which the Lord has been teaching them in their smaller, or at all events more mixed and desultory service.

As to how and when this call comes to "go up higher" in service, none can intermeddle between a soul and its God. All that one can say is, "Watch and pray." Sometimes, nay often, it is from all near ties being taken away, and instead of sinking into the insipidity of a life of world-like routine and dependence, a childless widow, a bereaved sister or daughter, has the courage to give herself en-

tirely to the outer and visible work of the Lord. At other times it may be that in a crowded home, even among "chief women," it is felt that as a marriage would be joyfully welcomed to a "chief man" in authority at the very ends of the earth, why should not at least one be spared to the happy yoke of the "Chiefest of ten thousand," whether at home or abroad? There can be no doubt that in all the "greater works" established in Christian society, educated and refined women—that is to say, ladies in the ordinary acceptation of that word—have a wider sphere of influence than others: that they are everywhere needed, as the officers and commanders, so to speak, of the excellent corps of uneducated heads but active hands, to be found in all departments of work; but it is not so generally seen that those who are perhaps more distinctively "chief women," are every bit as valuable and as likely to receive the individual blessing, while for themselves it is even more valuable training. These are weighty words, and had need to be pondered by women either of high rank themselves, or nearly connected with such: "Let him that is chief, be as he that doth serve." (Luke xxii. 26.)

In the life of Agnes Jones, we have a remarkable instance of faithfulness in early works among home poor, being the first soldierly school amongst many

which trained her for being "the best general we ever had."* In her ministrations to the wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores of her own people at Fahan, she learned to take up a cross, which when left on one side materially disturbs all efficient special work. "No one could be acquainted with her without knowing that she had learned to 'endure hardness,' as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. You would have wondered to see how the desire to fit herself for being useful among the poor, had enabled her to conquer all fastidiousness. In all my acquaintance with her, I never knew her to shrink from a duty because of its repulsiveness. . . . She had as much as any woman I ever knew, got over the feeling that work is unlady-like. Everything that could help the afflicted, and bring honour to her dear Lord, she gladly undertook."† But there was another training in her early home-life, which we can see beautifully fitting in with that which she received at Kaiserswerth, and without which she could not have been the "general" she became; and that was her implicit obedience to home authority.

* Miss Nightingale, in Introduction to "Memorials of Agnes E. Jones."

† *Ibid.*, Miss M. Myles, in Appendix.

It makes one shiver to think of what the results would be if amateur nursing became "fashionable," and independent young ladies of the period, with their exceedingly lax notions of home claims and home obedience, were to flock to our wards and our hospitals. While it is true that that grandest of feminine occupations is "one of the fine arts,—I had almost said the finest of the fine arts,"*—it needs but little observation of its schools to see that some such early home preparation and fitness is absolutely needed; a good many "least things" have to be carefully learned before the art student goes her way to the

"City hospital's hot ward,
A gentle worker for the gentle Lord."

It is interesting to observe that in all the most honourable and successful spheres of special work open to ladies, there are two things combined,—work for body and for soul. As women,—*i.e.*, those taken out of man's already created being,—they have, whatever their station may be, peculiar gifts of ministration to the ill and infirmities of their fellow creatures. In nursing, in feeding, in binding up, in tender sympathy, in delicacy of finger-touch, they

* *Ibid.*, Miss Nightingale.

have gifts which no inequality of station with their sister-women can rob them of. In all the spheres of which we shall take a rapid glance by and bye, it will be seen that in each the needs of the body,—the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner,—take a very prominent place, in accordance with our Lord's own rules of service and of reward. (Matt. xxv. 34—46; James ii. 15, 16.) They are carefully balanced with, or rather made subservient to the needs of the soul, to the "greater work" of conversion. To work with God in building up living stones into His temple, is THE end and aim of all true Christian work,—to re-create, not to patch and mend. Hence the cross which "chief women" have to bear when they listen to and follow a call from God to go outside their own circles. As long as it is *only* the body, *only* literal bread-giving, *only* nursing, etc., there are interesting precedents in the history of nuns and heroines of old times, and a good deal of admiration even may be excited. I meet with the following remarks on this sort of standard from one of keen critical vision, blended with the most delicate, yet powerful gifts of mind: * "Be kind to the poor; nurse the sick; perform all duties of charity and generosity;

* Memoirs of Sara Coleridge.

be not religious overmuch; above all, keep in the background all the peculiar cardinal doctrines of Christianity; avoid all vices and gross sins; believe the Bible to be true, without troubling yourself about particulars; behave as resignedly as you can when misfortunes happen; feel grateful to God for His benefits; think at times of your latter end, and try 'to dread your grave as little as your bed,' if possible. Such will ever be,—more or less pronounced and professed,—the sum of religion in many very amiable and popular persons. Anything more than this they will throw cold water upon by bucketsful."

Yes: truly it is a different thing when it is a question of SOUL work,—when the aim is to bring the poor unto Christ,—when the voice is to be raised, not only in compassion for the sickness, but to speak of Christ the Good Physician, "who has healed *us*: why not *you*?" Ah, then it is "enthusiasm," "fanaticism;" nay, the world is not slower to call it "*madness*" than in the early days. (Is. lix. 15, mar.; John x. 20; Acts xxvi. 24; 1 Cor. xiv. 23.) Mr. Foster says, "He that would do some great thing in this short life, must apply himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces as to idle spectators, who live only to amuse themselves, looks

like insanity."† This is strangely enough more especially the case when it has to do with souls. I was lately struck by reading, in a most interesting biography of a public man, these two sentences. Speaking approvingly of the Christian reserve of this eminent character, one admirer says, giving his personal recollections, "He locked up the sacred fire in his heart." A few pages further on, the same writer remarks, with equal approbation of his political zeal, "One caught from him the sacred fire." That unreserved force which is right in the politics of the world, becomes fanatical and absurd when it has to do with the politics of eternity. "Chief women," therefore, who desire to devote their lives to their fellow-creatures' bodies and souls, must seek and exercise the gift of courage; a most necessary adjunct to all true bread-giving. In some sense it is natural. Even the mere bravery of the battle-field has not always been a-wanting to our sex; but I think we may fairly claim as an often proved possession, that other higher sort which has not shrunk from the cross and the sepulchre,—from the stake and the rack in old times,

† This sentence is quoted from Foster's Essay on the Romantic, in the Rev. W. Hewitson's "Memoirs;" but it is not in the recent edition of Foster's Essays, which is the only one I have.

and from those moral and physical stakes and racks which constantly occur in even ordinary lives, and from which women certainly shrink less than men. The women of old were "not ashamed of Jesus" when He was upon the shameful cross, and afterwards have many a time been "tortured, not accepting deliverance." (Heb. xi. 35.) May we not expect that we, more than others, will not be ashamed of Him now, when He is in His unseen glory, as we hope that He will not be ashamed of us when He comes in that glory unveiled!

Yet social and Belgravian courage is a much more difficult gift. To hold Bible-readings or Bible-classes, not in cellars, but in drawing-rooms; or to say to a friend, "Come, let us read the Word of God together;" or to take action which announces us either as "mad" or "too good," takes, I verily believe, more out of some women than it would do to be chained to a burning stake. It must be however sought and found as a direct gift and grace of the Spirit; and the promise ever stands true: "Blessed are they that trust in Him before (*i.e.*, in the presence of) the children of men." (Ps. xxxi. 19.)

It must be remembered that in the case of those who go, and of those who give leave to go out into special service, there must be real cross-bearing. The service of God is no child's play. Miss Night-

ingale says of a mother and sister, "Upon the awful character of that sacrifice I cannot speak. . . . They gave her to God." The full, fair sight of this fact is one of the benefits of the volume to which I have so often referred. Another fact, fully brought out in it, is the possibility of the double cure being combined in nursing as well as in medical mission-work. Some talk of nursing as so all-important, so mind-absorbing, that it is impossible, even as far as time goes, to unite the cure of the soul with it; but while it may be a painful historical fact that all Christian women are not the best nurses, it is equally the case that the best and most effectual nurse will be the one who unites good care of the soul with good care of the body. In the busy hospital, Agnes Jones wrote: "I trust and believe I am a Bible-woman as well as a nurse, and I can sometimes see fruit which shows that God is blessing me here."

In looking around at the special corners of the vineyard where women, and "chief women" among them, may be called by the Master to occupy special posts, the one to which one's heart goes out most,—that of hospital and nursing work,—I shall not say much about, because it is already so well known from Miss Nightingale's writings, and the records of Miss Jones' life, as well

as by the different memorials of Kaiserswerth, and similar institutions. The question of the mental work there is often mooted. It seems as if it were a most valuable part of training in several ways. First, as a test of what sort of stuff women are made. A "chief woman" who disdained to learn and practice certain things, would for instance show that she had not within her the true spirit of her that "serves." Second, such work is no doubt conducive to that submissive, obedient spirit, which, as any one can see who has made hospital rounds, is necessary in a good nurse. To be "under orders" (as at Kaiserswerth),—to ask leave before you quit a room, or without a murmur to clean a grate or a staircase, may seem very small things to some, but to other independent spirits they would be impossibilities; hence their testing use. "Agnes often said that the most valuable lesson she learned at Kaiserswerth, was that of *implicit obedience*." And Mr. Moodie Stuart wrote, on visiting that institution, "It is humbling and instructive to know that the Evangelical congregations of Britain furnish less useful sick nurses than the Churches tinged with Ritualism, because the nurses who come from us are more anxious to take charge and to administer medicine, than to obey, to learn, to serve. In the German nurses it is beautiful to see the spirit of self-denial

and submission and service."* Third, the greatest reason would seem to be that ladies may the more intelligently train uneducated women into their menial work, or at least see it rightly done. Certainly, as a general rule, however, the time of the educated women should be left as far as possible for the claims on heart and head, which are so urgently necessary. Another good reason for ladies being able to put their hands to any work, is that often in deaconess' homes and institutions of various kinds, there are times and places when hired service is almost unattainable, sometimes from want of funds, sometimes from the immense pressure of work. Happy, then, those "chief women" who are literally able to be as those that "serve." An interesting story is told of devotion to secular art so great as to render the performance of menial work both pleasant and practicable. An Italian lady painter of eminence, Rosalba Carriera, would never take pupils. A lady of rank, longing for painting lessons, disguised herself as a maidservant, was engaged by the painter, and so faithfully performed the daily tasks, that her mistress became interested in her, and taught her many valuable art secrets; so that the aristocratic maidservant

* Note to p. 127 of "Memorials of Agnes Jones."

became afterwards known as a skilful miniature painter.† So and much more does the end ennoble the means in the “fine arts” of Christian work.

After, and very near nursing, comes in the glorious field of medical mission work. I had intended to abridge the following letter which I received lately from a young lady,—but I feel it to be so practical and so graphic that my readers will better thank me if I leave it as it is, only adding that I know a mission in England where another young lady devotes quite half her life to this “double cure,” much in the same way described in the following :—

“*London, Nov. 18th, 1873.*”

“It has often cheered me very much to find to how great an extent woman may share in the medical missionary’s labours and privileges,—to see, indeed, how *essential* she is to the thorough carrying out and full success of his work. In Liverpool, through the years when the band of lady helpers has been largest, three-fourths of the cases of conversion recorded in the medical mission reports, seem to have been in connection with their efforts, and especially through blessing resting on their house to house visitation. The lady from the

† Mrs. Ellet’s “Artists of all Ages.”

dispensary goes to the homes of the most prejudiced and degraded, not as an ordinary district visitor, but as the representative of the doctor, who holds, according to the ideas of these poor creatures, the keys of life and of death. The first glance round the little waiting-room for visitors at the London Medical Mission, 13, Endell Street, St. Giles,—a mission which though lately established, is a fair type of all,—tells that woman's hands have been at work, for there, in a corner, are Scripture picture-books for the use of the patients. It is a Wednesday, and twelve o'clock finds us in an upper room, in the midst of a small, but ever growing circle of such of the attendants at the dispensary as are 'asking their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.' 'More chairs' are again and again needed, until nearly twenty deeply interested listeners are gathered round a beloved lady friend, to hear from her lips of the balm in Gilead, of the Physician there. Five minutes to one: the members of the Bible-class go down to the already crowded patients' waiting-room, and after commending the work of the day—past and to come—to our heavenly Father, we follow them. Punctually at one, the medical missionary's address is given, and the chorus of coughing is hushed to listen to his few simple words of 'truth without controversy,'

to 'the old, old story' of Jesus, the Alpha of the faith of every religious community. When the doctor goes down to the consulting-room, many of the people who have late tickets leave for an hour or two for their own homes; but a good number remain who are thankful for a few words of kindly interest, in soul or body, from the lady-visitor, as she goes from one to another. Or, has she courage to speak to them collectively? The poor are no critics, but they understand the language of love; and eager, brightening faces, and, perhaps, better still, falling tears, will reward the effort. Or, can the lady 'raise a tune?' The poor love hymn-singing, even as Luther tells us, the devil hates it; and 'a verse may find him who a sermon flies.' I have often wondered that more frequent use is not made of singing in visiting, especially amongst the sick. There seems, indeed, to be scarcely an accomplishment which one may not put out to interest here. In the neighbourhood of Soho, the French quarter of London, amongst the people of different kindreds and nations who flock to the dispensary, one may find use for the languages so often learned at school to be forgotten. There is a show of respectability about the patients of the London Medical Mission. The desire to keep up appearances is as strong amongst the poor of the

Seven Dials, as amongst their richer neighbours, and a system of lending and borrowing shawls and bonnets seems to be the result. Yet a decent outside may cover starvation, as a medical missionary full well knows. Perhaps before we go, we peep into the storeroom, to see the contents of the boxes there. If *we* cannot supply what is lacking, some friend may be able to do so. It is a great comfort, though, in visiting a medical mission, to feel that however few one's resources may be, one need never go empty-handed. Everything is welcomed, from the blankets, for which special request is made at the Bristol monthly prayer-meetings, to the string of empty cotton reels for the babies, at sight of which the Bible-woman's face lightens up. I feel after all that it matters little *what* ladies do for the medical mission cause,—whether they speak of it to a friend, labour among the little ones of its Sunday-schools, visit, act as hospital-dressers to the medical superintendent (as one lady has long done in Manchester), or devote themselves to the life of a female medical missionary in the zenanas of India,—so long as they do recognise 'the double cure' agency as our Saviour's own plan for gathering together the outcasts, and strive, according to their ability, to carry it out '*in remembrance of Him.*' Even a dear little five-year-old child has

begun this work, for she prays morning and evening, 'Let there be a medical mission in ——.' "

The subject of female medical mission work in the zenanas of the East, mentioned above, is but little known. Yet nowhere is female medical science so truly in its right place, for it is the only place where that of men cannot enter. The mortality of Oriental women in childbirth, and of young children, besides that arising from other diseases, is frightful to think of; and to meet it there *are* earnest LADIES qualifying themselves to aid these sufferers. Literally admitted within the veil,—not feeling a pulse or examining a tongue through holes in a curtain,—it is easy to see the medical importance of such a sphere, and also the immense civilizing influences that a refined and cultivated woman can thus diffuse. But think also of the spiritual door opened by the Lord's blessing, on skill and kindness. Oh, what blessed words of Christ may be spoken by such women; and how many souls, better than all the gems of the East, may yet sparkle on their future crowns! Even without the medical element there is a large field for work, comparatively lately opened,—not among the thousands of women of the lower classes, who were always in some manner approachable, and as in the case of our own "masses," more so by Bible-

women of their own position,—but among the “chief women” of zenana life, who are quite as sensitive as our “chief women” can be on the score of position, and fully able to appreciate the advantages of refinement, even if they have it not themselves. Here are some extracts from three stirring reports of Christian work for immortal souls, which too often are flung unread into our waste-paper baskets:—

“The *difficulties were*, how to gain access to the upper classes of women; *now they are*, how to find teachers to enter upon the work before them! The appeal is to English women, enjoying the privileges of Christian life and liberty, both for labourers and means. Women in India have been hitherto unreached; now they are waiting to be taught. ‘The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few.’ Who will give, and who will go? *Some could do both.*” “God has in a wonderful way opened close doors, but, for want of help, we cannot enter them. . . . Is there not a feeling that ‘any one will do for India?’ Whereas we ask for the flower of the ladies’ colleges, the best nurses from the hospitals, and the most devout. . . . We do not ask for an *army* of zenana teachers; the most devoted missionaries I have known have been Eurasians and natives, and why should we despise the workers

God has put ready to our hands? We want from home a few picked women who will take the higher subjects, and train these teachers and nurses, and deepen their spiritual life." . . . "Oh, then, again and again to our women at ease, with time, education, and wealth, we say, Go, go! Go yourselves, if you can, in the strength of the Lord and in the power of His might, to carry to these needing sisters all they want; and to those who cannot go, we say, Send,—send those who can go, and support them with your sympathy, your money, and your prayers, and you will find that there will spring up work enough here at home for you to do in this cause to keep you close to Jesus, and in fullest communion with Him and His cause."

Is there not a voice for our boudoirs and drawing-rooms in these sentences? Here, too, is an interesting example of the educational influence, truly that of "higher education:" "Lady Muir, the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-western Provinces, told me a story of one young woman, which, as it were, opened a whole vista to me of the influences that such a society as this might effect in India. There was a mother who had been taught (I believe by a lady of this Society), to know Jesus Christ, and to love Him. She could not confess it,—it would have been impossible for

her at that time; but she had in her lap, when Lady Muir was speaking to her, her little boy, and as she dandled him up and down, she looked into his face, and said to Lady Muir, 'It will be different when he grows up. My boy shall know about Jesus Christ, *and my boy shall be free to confess Him.*' Now if we could only multiply instances of that kind a thousand-fold, ay, a million-fold! There is a field for us."

Then, to come back to our "ain countrie:" what a field of work in the north of London! Mildmay, that blessed centre of Christian influence and prayer, and now of embalmed memory, has many peculiar openings for women, aye, for "chief women" by the dozen. Look at its deaconess house, its nursing home,—its hospital,—heads and hands always being needed more and more. Or shall we enter for a few minutes a drawing-room, home-like and beloved by many, in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square? What a scene of well-ordered work! Bible-women and pioneers, nurses and lady superintendents, all clustering round the well-known "head-centre," our beloved L. N. R. Ask *her* if she could use profitably the consecrated lives of a few "chief women," "willing and obedient" in the Lord's Bible-work, and mark her answer! Or let us stand for a few moments at yonder prison door, where Mrs. Mere-

dith's ladies are mingling with the wretched crowd of liberated criminal women. Entreaties, commands, the words of God, are all employed, and a few but half-willing ones are carried off captive by loving-kindness. How tenderly they are ministered to in a room at hand, at a comfortable breakfast! And then begins their life of reformation,—literally in many cases the forming again of their blighted lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. "Chief women" have been, and ARE in such scenes, but "yet there is room." Or take your watch at the "Lawn"—Lambeth, and there you will see heaps of the foulest linen, from the slightest contact with which you will do well to gather up your garments. Yet fair drawing-room hands have counted out heaps upon heaps of just such horrors. "Why?" Not as Roman Catholic penance, but for the simple reason that here was work for "idle hands" to wash, and thus be kept from "mischief still," and thus lawfully earn lawful money. Yet not a finger of these degraded ones would touch the loathsome masses, till shamed into it by seeing that fingers consecrated to the King considers all work ennobling. Or look at the work among the fallen ones. "Chief women" ere now have thrown their time into such work, and all who know even a little of its nature, without being them-

selves able to leave their own circle, know well what a blessing it would be were solitary women of means and position to come forward and say, "*I will go into that home; I will live in that reformatory; and, God helping me, I will be a mother and a sister to these unfortunates. I will act as a general to the already overworked and ill-superintended superintendents; I will give bread, mental, moral, and spiritual, out of the bread so freely given to me.*" Oh, what blessed individuality of life and work that would be! The home and hearth feelings, the loyalty to those above them, the admiration for that which is gentle and refined, which are regions of thought and sensations utterly unknown to or forgotten by these poor wanderers, would thus be more successfully reached than in any other way. ONLY it needs the entire consecration to the King's service. This of itself produces hope, belief, and expectation for others. There is some reason to believe that Mary the friend of Jesus, who sat at His feet and entered so largely into His heart and mind, had been herself one of this very class. I would not press this point, for I know it is not generally held, but I would just leave with my readers these passages of Scripture. In Luke vii. 11, 36—50, we find that a "woman...who was a sinner" in the city of Nain brought an alabaster

box of ointment to Jesus, washing His feet with her tears, and wiping them with her hair,—possessing probably a rare amount of that womanly gift. Her sins are forgiven her, her much love openly recognised, and Jesus says, “GO in peace.” It seems probable that then, as often now, when a sinner of that class is reclaimed, she went home from Nain to her native Bethany a “new creature.” Some time afterwards we find “Mary” sitting at Jesus’ feet (Luke x. 39); what more natural position for the newly pardoned sinner, now in her “right mind”? (Comp. Luke viii. 35.) The next notices show us that Jesus “loved” Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus; and in John xi. 2; xii. 3, the almost similar incident of the ointment and peculiar feature of the long hair, would seem to make the matter clear, although instead of the homage paid by the anxious sinner, it is now given by the pardoned saint;—neither are there *tears* mentioned: all is strong faith and marvellous sympathy with the very heart of Jesus. (Ver. 7.) To those who take this view of the identity of the woman who was a sinner, and the friend of Jesus, a new hope and expectation for even the most fallen may arise, which would much lighten that heavy work, rendered often still heavier by absolute unbelief in

the possibility of their being saved, except "as by fire." It may be, however, that these fallen ones, according to the words of Jesus Himself, may press into heaven "before us," receiving a more "abundant entrance," as undoubtedly all will do who "love much," even if they have sinned much.

I have only glanced at a few of the special works of the day for souls and bodies, in which workers are needed,—nay, more than workers. The special work of the Lord and its results is often like the work and spoils of the sea, of which our fisher-wives sing:—

"Ye may ca' them halesome faring,
We ca' them lives o' men."

Yes: "LIVES" are wanted in the vineyard. "Oh, daughters of God, are there so few to yield them?"



XVIII.

Excelsior.

“The higher Christian life ! What does it mean ?
Where lies the secret of its mystic power ?
Ye speak of Jesus, and of life in Him,
And bask in sunshine every passing hour.

“The higher Christian life ! May it be mine,—
The peace, the joy, the Sabbath of the soul !
I long to know and feel the Power Divine,
And seek in vain, like sailors for the pole.

“The higher Christian life—I know it well—
Is not an heirloom passed from son to son ;
Nor can a brother to a brother tell
The secret of the victory himself hath won.

“The higher Christian life ! Whate’er it be,
It must be found in Christ,—our first and last :
And soon the day will break, the shadows flee ;
Within the veil my anchor safe is cast.”

W. M.,
From “The Christian.”

Excelsior.

"Friend, go up higher."—LUKE xiv. 10.

IN this concluding chapter, I propose to gather up the threads of what I have desired to place before my readers in these imperfect pages, as some answer to the often asked question, "What *is* the higher Christian life?"

The higher Christian life *is* emphatically higher. —It is not contented with that which is low; it does not rest in that which is high; it does not profess to be that which is highest: it *IS* "higher." I do not use the words "ought to be" now, or in any of these attempts at definition, because just as our lives fall short of the Scriptural standard, so far, and for the time, is our Christian life NOT higher. The Bible life, then, is progressive: it reaches higher and higher. We are all familiar with the poem and picture of the "banner with the strange device, Excelsior." But the Scriptural Excelsior is not a song of self-effort,—not so much a toiling up a mountain full of corries and chasms,

of necessary falls and arisings, of desirable ups and downs, as a "song of degrees,"—as, in short, "a song of ascents," or "of steps," as it was occasionally translated; and this last thought is beautifully illustrative of true Divine progress,—the steps prepared for us,—the ladder, with its equal rounds, set up by Another between heaven and earth (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13), the ascent a sure and steady one, even as the ordered "steps" of the sun's ascent in the heavens,—"the path of the shining light which shineth more and more towards the perfect day." It may therefore be considered also an ambitious life. It will not take the sycamores of the low plains, when it can have the cedars of the heights. Nor does it account silver as enough, when it can use the pure gold. (See 2 Chron. ix. 20, 27.) Nor will a few grains of the precious ore content the possessors of the mine. Its aim is not only to admire the glory of the Lord, but to be changed into the same image, from glory TO glory. (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

The higher Christian is a lowly life.—No spiritual pride CAN be born of it. It may intrude *into* it from beneath, and so lower and debase it; but the very essence of the true Excelsior is the crucifixion of self, and the life, righteousness, and ascension of Another accepted and con-

fessed, and that other the meek and lowly One. When failure does *not* come, therefore, it is all HIS doing; when it does come, the sin of needless sinning is our own. Low life and lowly life are often confounded. Matted, feeble roots underground, from whence shoots up no stately tree, or broken-off foundations, whence arises no noble edifice, are low, but not lowly, and give no credit to horticulturist or mason. To be rooted and grounded, not in humility, or affliction, or self in any form, but in the love of Christ, so that His work in real growth and soul-edification, or building-up (Eph. ii. 20—22; iii. 17), is seen and confessed to His glory. This is to be lowly, and not low.

The higher Christian life is a well-balanced life.—Its measures are just, its proportions fair, its weights correct, because Christ is its indwelling centre. It looks on the things of others, and not on itself. Those who possess it are above the petty heights and depths of their former lives, because joy, sorrow, health, sickness, wealth, success, or disappointment, are not only the gifts, but part of their life (Gal. ii. 20) with the living Christ.

The higher Christian life is a circumspect life, in obedience to Eph. v. 15.—It is a keen-sighted life, after the likeness of its Lord. (Is. xi. 3.) But the keen vision is not of others: the circumspection

is more of its own footsteps, and less of the neighbours and brothers. Nay, it is more a watching of the acts of the Divine Guest than even of its own. These pithy words, "A great deal of religion takes a great deal of looking after," have a depth of spiritual meaning in them,—only the best way of doing so is by living IN the presence of Him who cares and thinks for us. What a well-looked-after life indeed we may be living, "in a land which the Lord thy God careth for,"—the eyes of the Lord our God always upon us, "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. xi. 12), "from January till December,"—houses of God, where "His heart and His eyes are perpetually" (2 Chron. vii. 16),—helpless little birds of God, taught and watched and gathered under His sheltering wing. (Matt. xxiii. 37; Deut. xxxii. 11, 12; Psalm xci. 4.) It is thus also a momentary life, watered every moment of the night and of the day (Is. xxvii. 3), and thus only is it a sustained life,—rising higher and higher, as well as deepening and ever deepening, till because of that Presence of perfection, love, and care, it becomes a steady, sustained, excelsior flight, easier and easier moment by moment.

In another chapter I have alluded to the flight of the bird being the consequence of its victory over resisting forces, by possession of a stronger

force within. So of its progress we read : "Those who ever watched the flight of birds with any care must have observed that when once they have obtained a certain initial velocity, and a certain elevation, by rapid and repeated strokes upon the air, they are thus able to fly with comparatively little exertion, and very often to pursue their course for long distances without any flapping of wings." * So it is only through the inner given power that we can be as flying birds (Isa. xxxi. 5), that we can mount up with wings as eagles. (Isa. xl. 29—31. Ex. xix. 4.)

The higher Christian life is a fearing life.—Full of that happy blessed fear which those who "love much" have of grieving their Beloved,—a fear of bringing the smallest reproach on that name (Neh. v. 9) from those "that are without" the home, the abiding place. Even the loving ones of earth know these phases of fear. So, and much more fearing, and in proportion much more blessed, is the soul-fear of and for its Divine Beloved One,—a "delicious fear," as I heard well quoted the other day,—a tender trembling in carrying out His glorious work, and obeying His holy Word. (Phil. ii. 12, 13; Psalm cxxxv. 20; Isa. xxxiii. 6; Acts ix. 31.) Blessed is he that *thus* feareth the Lord.

But it is one of the beautiful anomalies of the higher life that it is also a fearless one. It is "quiet from fear of evil" (Prov. i. 33), because the fearing soul constantly hears and obeys the Voice which constantly says, "Fear not."

The higher Christian life is a confessing life.—It is not ashamed to say with Daniel, "Thou HAST strengthened me" (Dan. x. 19); nor with David, "Come and hear what the Lord hath done for my soul;" nor with Paul, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20); nor with Nehemiah, "Should such a man as I flee?" (Neh. vi. 11.) I the weak, but I the mighty, in another's strength. It cannot HELP being a confessing life, sooner or later; for out of the abundance of the heart the lips *must* speak. When abundance of life is in a body, it cannot help showing it by the ruddy cheek, the bright eye, the clear voice, the firm step, the well-carried head. So the life which Jesus came to give is so full of vital health, that it, as it were, overflows: "filled with the Spirit," it must confess to having life. Jesus said (and are not these words almost forgotten?), "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more ABUNDANTLY." (John x. 10.) Each confessing life will not, however, be called to confess with the lips at all times;

"for there is a time to speak, and a time to be silent:" but there will always be the confession which comes from the growing light. The beams of the morning confess their existence by the very fact of their silent journey of "degrees." The warm glow of the winter's hearth confesses a great source of heat and power. The bright shining of a candle is but a confession of a hidden fulness of light. (Luke xi. 36.)

The higher Christian life is a pleasing life.—The Lord taketh pleasure in His people. His Bride is daily getting rid of the spots and wrinkles, and all such things which have hitherto been grieving the Spirit of her Lord. (Eph. v. 26, 27.) Peace,—that blessed characteristic even of the true wedded homes of this life,—"perfect peace" is predominant in this soul-union between the Prince of Peace and the Daughter of Peace (the "Shulamite"), and the soul knows that its tabernacle is peace. (Job v. 24, margin.) The Father has complacency in His Son's trophies of grace. The Son sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied; and the loving "Spirit," who has lusted "enviously" (James iv. 5, marg., and see Dean Alford's Tr.) over each soul, till He could draw it with the calls of love, rejoices in the glorifying of the Christ. All hard thoughts are loved down by the wondrous love of Deity. Who can read such a

verse as this, and not feel that the want of our lives has hitherto been our small realization of that surrounding, joying, resting Love? "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. iii. 17.)

The higher Christian life is a serving life.—There is not only, therefore, a patient continuance in well-doing; but the longer the Master and servant work together, the more is it work of blessing. "I will do better unto you than at your beginnings." (Ezek. xxxvi. 11.) He serves not only his "own Master" joyfully, but the life is so one with the Master that their work is one; and the higher the love goes, the more it longs to teach others to sing the song of degrees,—the simple Bible-path of the true Excelsior. It is also a discriminating life. It cannot help others if it says, like Jehoshaphat, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people." (2 Chron. xviii. 3.) If it is not of quick understanding, it will believe the world when it says, "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do." (Ezra iv. 2.) And so the Lord's work would *not* be done, and souls would *not* be builded, and His house would lie desolate. It is a life, too, of skilful diagnosis, if I may use the expression, as well as

cure of soul-diseases, because it studies under the "Good Physician."

The higher Christian life is a broad life. "You, and those who think with you about this doctrine, are so narrow, you are always bringing it up," was said to me by a much esteemed friend the other day. We may be narrow, but if so, that is our sin and failure; but these glorious truths are not narrow,—not exclusive,—but universal. Like as an all-pervading atmosphere, the higher life, which is the higher power, so pervades the whole teaching of Scripture, is so all-sufficient for all the needs of those who are willing to accept of it, that we cannot but speak the things which we have believed and seen and heard. However great a kingdom may be, however varied its subjects, kindreds, and tongues, yet the sway and power of the King must and does affect the whole community, though diverse and scattered; and it is a sign of true loyal breadth, and not of narrowness, that the regal power penetrates into every corner of every life; for "where the word of a king is, there is power." (Eccles. viii. 4.) To acknowledge the kingly power, therefore, of the reigning Christ in the smallest portions of our lives, hearts, and homes, to believe that it ought to leaven all "divinity," and that it is the marrow of all Scrip-

turally preached doctrine, seems to me breadth and not narrowness. For what is broader than the Christ? what is more universal than His Royal Sway who is "the way, the truth, and the life?" (John xiv. 6.)

Here is a definition of a Christian's daily life, which, if it were,—as it ought to be, and may be,—fully carried out in each member of Christ's Church, we should soon see within her walls a love and a power which would be truly broad, truly Catholic. "With the King Himself we may ever have such fellowship that even amidst trial our joy will be full. A living sinner, enjoying the acquaintance, the friendship, the intimacy, the love of a living Saviour,—that is religion, that is godliness, that is the outgoing and exercise of a Divine, holy life."*

And now one word in conclusion, as to the peculiar prominence and power of this higher Christian life for those women who sit in the high places of this world.

(1) Merely in their capacities as women,—as weak women,—all the weaker and the more wearied, perchance, because more is required of them,—what a wonderful boon is this Rock of strength, that is higher than they (Ps. lxi. 2),—this great, broad, overshadowing Power, in which they can find

* Hewitson's Memoirs.

shelter and take courage. One, too, peculiarly suited to the feminine temperament, if, as is said of us, it is easier to us to believe, than it is to the more hurried, sterner lives of fathers, husbands, and brethren. But if easier, not the less, but the more pleasing to Him to whose honour and praise it is that He should be believed in with a full and simple and childlike trust. Of that "woman named Damaris," we know literally nothing, except that she "believed" (Acts xvii. 34), and believed in a way that made it worthy to be recorded.

(2) But it is a special boon to "chief women," as members of a species of society which more than any other rejects the universal sway of the true King. In the upper walks of life, far oftener than in the lowest, there is the attempt made to follow two masters,—to serve two Kings.

"God and the world—we worship both together ;
Draw not our laws to Him, but His to our's ;
Untrue to both, so prosperous in neither,
Th' imperfect will bring forth but barren flowers ;
Unwise as all distracted interests be,
Strangers to God, fools in humanity ;
Too good for great things, and too great for good,
While still 'I dare not' waits upon 'I would.'"

How the higher life of the universal Kingship of Christ comes into such divided, narrowed lives, with the broad atmosphere of new life, and much

love, and unlimited power! "Chief women" as they may feel themselves to be in the limited circles of earth, it is not till their hearts have received the King as the "chiefest among ten thousand" (Cant. v. 10), that they themselves can be truly "chiefest" in humility, in decision, in loving much, in being "servants of all;" even as "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark x. 45.)

"O Master, at Thy feet
I bow in rapture sweet!
Before me, as in darkening glass,
Some glorious outlines pass
Of love, and truth, and holiness, and power:
I own them Thine, O Christ, and bless Thee for this hour.

"O full of truth and grace,
Smile of Jehovah's face!
O tenderest heart of love untold,
Who may Thy praise unfold!
Thee, Saviour, Lord of lords and King of kings,
Well may adoring seraphs hymn with veiling wings.

"Yea, let my whole life be
One anthem unto Thee,
And let the praise of lip and life
Outring all sin and strife:
O Jesus, Master! be Thy name supreme,—
For heaven and earth the one, the grand, the eternal theme."

*From "Ministry of Song," by
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